



Concordia Theological Monthly



S E P T E M B E R • 1 9 5 0

Concordia Theological Monthly

Published by The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

EDITED BY THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY
ST. LOUIS, MO.

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CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY is published monthly by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo., to which all business correspondence is to be addressed.

\$3.00 per annum, anywhere in the world, payable in advance.

Entered at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo., as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 5, 1918.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Concordia Theological Monthly

VOL. XXI

SEPTEMBER 1950

No. 9

Reconciliation and Justification

By ADOLF KOEBERLE¹

1

ONLY he can understand the concept "reconciliation" who has experienced the implications of the separation between God and man and between man and God. He who ignores this *mysterium iniquitatis* and refuses to see the wide chasm between the holy God and the guilty creature cannot comprehend the glory of the concept "atonement," but on the contrary will in a rebellious spirit be offended at it.

The underlying principle of the vast number of religious or philosophical world views rules out the concept of atonement as entirely unnecessary and superfluous. The Brahmanic and Hindu mysticism is monistic and pantheistic. According to this Indian philosophy, man is not wicked, only foolish. He is too easily influenced by the impression which visible things make upon him and fails to understand their illusory character. As a result he fails to effect the mystical union of his own individuality with the all-embracing cosmic being.

One of the greatest scholars in the field of antiquity has characterized Greek piety as the feeling or awareness of the immediate presence of the deity, a presence which is evident in nature and in man and which everyone can experience at any time. The Dionysian disciple of these past mystery religions, who has recently been

¹ Dr. Adolf Koeberle is professor of theology at Tuebingen. He is the author of the well-known *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, translated by John C. Mattes under the title *The Quest for Holiness*. He served as essayist at the first and second Bad Boll *Begegnung*. At the 1949 meeting he read the paper which is here offered in translation and with annotations prepared by F. E. M.

resuscitated in Nietzsche and Ludwig Klages, sees in Greek Hedonism the possibility of an "intoxicated union" with the deity.

Hegelianism at first glance seems to have recaptured at least one phase, man's vague idea of a separation between God and man, which can only be resolved in an atonement. However, the concept of atonement in Hegelian philosophy is diametrically opposed to that of the Scriptures. According to Hegel, such antithetical concepts as nature and spirit, authority and autonomy (*Freiheit*), the individual and the State, must be brought into a higher unity by a grand process of synthesis. But Hegel's pantheism completely ignores the basic problem, namely, the separation between God and man.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke, the spiritual father of our modern mystery cultists among the intelligentsia, is obsessed by the one idea that the entire universe is translucent, and that man can see God if he yields himself to an enjoyment of the splendor and glory of all things. When Scripture announces the absolute necessity of the atonement because of man's estrangement, this "noble spirit" becomes tremendously vehement: "Who is this Christ who interferes in all things? I shall not be abased for Christ's sake, but be good for God. I do not want to be addressed *a priori* as a sinner . . . I can talk to God and require no one to help me to write a letter to Him."

Finally, let me also briefly examine the basic principles of modern psychotherapy. Sigmund Freud, the pioneer in psychoanalysis, considers every guilt consciousness as a morbid complex, from which one is able to free himself by transferring it to the physician. C. G. Jung, the psychologist, believes that the goal of man must be to become an integrated personality by resolving the tensions between the conscious and the subconscious, between extroversion and introversion. But the deepest antithesis which cuts through the middle of our very existence, our antithesis to the holy "Thou," remains completely submerged. It need therefore not surprise us that wherever this separation is denied and man's inherent at-onement with God taken for granted, the Scriptural concept of atonement remains entirely unknown. But the separation (*Entzweiung*) is a reality, and we must recognize what it really is: man's rebellion against God and God's "No" to man.

2

The separation between God and man is portrayed in Scripture as man's flight from God. Jeremiah says: "They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Life" (Jer. 2:13) or, in the words of the parable: "Father, give me my portion of the goods . . . and shortly after the young man gathered all and went into a far country, where he wasted his substance" (Luke 15:12-13). Man does not want to remain in the fellowship of his heavenly home. He runs away from "being-in-love" and attempts to conquer life without God.

But the separation is far more than a single act of separation; the "away-from-God movement" becomes an "against-God movement." The mystery of man's rebellion is not seen in its final depth if we view it only as a *fugere a Deo*. The separation invariably becomes hostility and rebellion against God, a *hostilis impugnatio contra Deum*, as our Lutheran Confessions state. There we find a play on words which can be reproduced only in the original: Man is not only *aversus a Deo*, he is also *adversus Deum*. In his spite, resentment, anger, rebellion, man would enjoy nothing more than to begin an insurrection against God which would culminate in decide. Of the King of Kings he says: "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14), and when the Holy One Himself comes as our Brother in the plenitude of grace, then the word is passed around: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12:7).

Only a radical illumination by the Holy Ghost will enable us to see the basic error of our way and the dreadful seriousness of our condition. Man is so totally ignorant of his condition, so pleased with himself, so self-centered, that he imagines that his flight from God and his enmity against God is actually a grand achievement. Man foolishly thinks himself free and strong in his titanic pride and conceit and hopes that in this way he can ultimately become a superman. He is quite intrigued by his own ingeniously sinful maneuvers to achieve the true meaning of life.

For this reason a mirror in which he can see his perverseness must constantly be placed before man. According to Lutheran theology, this mirror service is performed in the first place by the Law. The holy will of God as revealed in the Law shows us

how far we have missed the goal of a joyous, complete fulfilling of the Law. But more, in our resistance against God's commandments our separation comes to light in its true essence, namely, as insurrection and rebellion against God. The mere preaching of the Law, however, does not remove the possibility of self-justification, as is evident in Pharisaism and in the ethical idealism of Kantian philosophy. Therefore God has given another sign, which will forever prevent man from making such a false deduction (*moralischer Kurzschluss*). This is the Cross of Christ.² The event of the Cross tells us in sharpest terms: Here you see your real selves, you are able to do nothing else but to hate the incarnate love of God, to persecute it, and to bruise it. You talk much about hunger for God and your intimate relation to God. But if the loving God confronts you "bodily" and approaches you in His fullness, then you not only completely fail to understand Him, but you cast Him out of the world as an unbearable reality. This sets forth in unmistakable terms that you have lost yourselves in your God-forsakenness and are hardened in your enmity against God. It is the great mystery of the atonement on Golgotha that here the separation is removed in such a way that at the same time the separation becomes uncovered down to its last detail. The necessity of an atonement does not become real to us until we have encountered Christ.

In our contemporary society the rupture and rebellion on the part of man manifest themselves especially in the problem of theodicy, the attempt to find the solution between the existence of evil and the sovereignty of God. A few years ago we heard the perverse, challenging, defiant challenge: "Jehovah, I defy Thee, I am the king of Babylon ('Jehovah, dir kuend' ich auf ewig Hohn! Ich bin der Koenig von Babylon')." But God has given His answer in such a dreadful manner that we have lost the senses of seeing and hearing. And now another form of rebellion has taken place. In his anger and despair man asks God: "Why do you permit us to

² In his *Quest for Holiness* Dr. Koeberle devotes the entire chapter "God's Judgment on Man's Self-Sanctification" to this point. The "preaching of the Cross" under this aspect is part of Christ's "foreign office." According to the Formula of Concord "the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ is a terrible proclamation of God's wrath" as long as "the veil of Moses hangs before men's eyes." (Art. V, 7—10; *Trigl.*, 803.)

suffer so terribly? How can we love Thee as the only true God if Thy hand is so heavy upon us?" Not only the *hybris*, part and parcel of every tower of Babel, separates from God, but also the distrust of God will sever the bond and bring about a complete alienation between God and man. Probably no one in our day has so crystallized modern man's *Zwei-fel* and reproach of God as the poet Ernst Wiechert. In his "*Jeremiaskinder*" he broadcasts his defiance of God, yes, even charges God with infanticide.

3

Man finds it difficult to recognize and admit the fact of his separation from God and his enmity against God. It is even more difficult for him to realize that God is also against him. Scripture reminds us of God's "No" when we read: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31 (cp. Deut. 4:24; Job 37:22). God's separation from man is clearly taught in all those Scripture passages which speak of God's wrath. But against no part of Scripture has greater objection been raised than against the testimony of God's wrath, judgment, and punishment. For that reason the Gnostic Marcion wanted to reduce "the God of wrath" to a "God of second order" in order to remove from the New Testament concept of God all reference to divine justice. For similar reasons the Alexandrian theologians Clement and Origen accepted the Neoplatonic idea of a passionless God (*affektlose Ruhe in Gott*). The philosopher Feuerbach employs the Biblical doctrine of the wrath of God as the chief argument for his theory that all religions, including the Christian, are illusionary. He holds that the doctrine of God's wrath clearly demonstrates how man transfers the attributes of his own nature into the metaphysical realm and ultimately makes them the attributes of God. The Ritschlian School declares that the idea of God's wrath is questionable, since it has no religious relevance nor moral value. At best, it is a concept to express man's imaginary guilt complex, which Jesus removed by showing that God was always at-one with man. We can still hear the German Christians of Thuringia tell us that the doctrine of God's wrath is a remnant of Judaism, entirely unworthy of the New Testament Christian revelation and ready for the scrap heap.

In spite of the objections which have accumulated during the history of the Christian Church, we cannot escape the reality that both Testaments speak in unmistakable terms of the wrath of God. Moses, beholding how vain and fleeting life is, says: "We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled" (Ps. 90:7), and David: "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and Thy hand presseth me sore" (Ps. 38:2). Because the unclean, sinful creature dare not come uncovered into the presence of the consuming fire, God ordained the Old Testament priesthood and the sacrificial culture. St. Paul testifies that the Law can only engender wrath because of man's rebellion. This is the general theme of Romans 7, and in Eph. 2:3 we read that because of our defection from God we are all "children of wrath."

But can we maintain these statements concerning God's wrath in the light of Christ's revelation of God, which, after all, is the only standard of our knowledge of God? The answer is a decisive "Yes," for Christ bears unmistakably the marks of the "holy wrath." Behold His zeal for the glory of God in the cleansing of the Temple! In His battle against deceitfulness and hypocrisy He will give absolutely no quarter. This uncompromising zeal in His warfare against the sin of man is a picture and an expression of the consuming majesty which is God Himself. If we were to remove from this picture all emotions, we would reduce God to a philosophical, abstract concept of quiescent, pure being. But God is life, and therefore cannot do otherwise than to burn, to be zealous. Only an imbecile remains unaffected when his "thou" is questioned, or his own individuality is ignored. The lover cannot remain indifferent when the object of his love is withdrawn from him. True love is always total love. Because God's love is infinite and all-inclusive, He must condemn our lack of confidence in Him and oppose our flight from Him and our rebellion against Him with a holy "No." However, we must be careful in speaking of the wrath of God lest we add to the picture of God the unholy concepts of our own sinful passions. Indeed, human wrath is always a dubious thing, for it is constantly distorted by our selfish interests and hurt pride. God's wrath, on the other hand, is pure flame and has absolutely nothing in common with cruelty or lack of self-control. This takes care of the charge of Feuerbach that we

apply our concept of wrath to God so that all theology is in the final analysis only anthropology or psychology. Nevertheless, it remains true that because man is created in the image of God, his emotions are reflections of the divine essence. However, through the Fall these have been completely distorted and corrupted.

4

When we have comprehended the dark mystery of the separation as man's defiant "No" against God as well as God's holy "No" against man, then we are ready to hear the Word of Reconciliation or Atonement. The history of religion is replete with the awareness of the necessity of a reconciliation between God and man and between man and God. True, there are instances where men believed themselves to be at-one with God. But there are, on the other hand, pathetic examples of man's attempt to establish a reconciliation with God. Man not only realizes that there is a law of guilt and expiation, but also attempts to restore the broken relation by such propitiations as pilgrimages, ablutions, giving of alms, fasting, asceticism. Man has an uncanny feeling that his rebellion against God is a *crimen lèse-majesté* and really deserves capital punishment. Therefore he offers the blood, i. e., the life, of a sacrificial animal. The sacrifice of an animal, yes, even of a sinful human life, can, of course, never effect a reconciliation. But these sacrifices show in a terrifying manner how keenly man is conscious of the dire results of his separation from God. In the light of man's experience the naive divine-immanence theory of modern religious mysticism is idle prattle. It is the glory of the Old Testament that the necessity of reconciliation, sacrifice, and expiation is presented from the viewpoint of an awakened conscience. Nevertheless, even the most sincere in the covenant congregation realized that the sacrifices in the Temple were insufficient, as is evident in the searching questions of Micah 6:6 or Ps. 49:8. In this inexplicable dilemma of our separation from God and our inability to bridge the chasm, there are only two possibilities: Either our condition is hopeless, and we remain under the "No" of God, under His wrath and judgment, under the closed heaven, under the separation from God and our enmity against God; or God Himself must intervene and rescue us from our hopeless condition.

The New Testament brings us the joyous message: God has intervened! (2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:22; Rom. 5:11; 1 John 2:1; 4:10.)

The Lutheran Confessions have not only accepted the joyous message of the reconciliation, but have made this Word of Reconciliation the key for understanding the entire Scriptures and made it the central doctrine of the Church's proclamation. Melancthon writes in the Apology: "The wrath of God cannot be appeased if we set against it our own works, because Christ has been set forth as a Propitiator, so that, for His sake, the Father may become reconciled to us" (Art. IV, 81, cp. also Art. XXVII, 17; and XXIV, 45).

5

The New Testament presents the atonement between God and man as having been effected solely by the *death* of Christ (Rom. 5:10). Likewise our Confessions confirm the intimate relation between the Atonement and Good Friday: "We teach that the sacrifice of Christ's dying on the cross has been sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that there is no need, besides, of other sacrifices, as though this were not sufficient for our sins" (Apology, XIII, 9). No other sacrifice is necessary. Modern Protestantism, oriented in Schleiermacher's theology, found it strange and almost impossible that our reconciliation is indissolubly associated with the death of Christ. The question is often asked: Has the reconciliation between God and man not been effected and completed in the *incarnation*? Is it not sufficient that God condescended to come to our plane and to unite Himself with us who had been His enemies? John 3:16 has often been interpreted in this light. Also the Oriental Church sees the miracle of reconciliation as completed in the mystery of the Incarnation, for by uniting Himself with our poor flesh and blood in a most intimate union, God, who is holy Love, has really forgiven us and has received us, who had been separated from Him, into His fellowship.³ There is, of course, some truth in this view. Also in Lutheran pulpits the message of Christmas is a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins as it is beautifully summarized in the

³ More recently some English theologians lean toward this so-called "incarnation theology"; see J. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ*. The Barthian view also comes into this category.

Benedictus of Zacharias (Luke 1:78). Nevertheless a doctrine of the reconciliation which is restricted to the two-nature doctrine of Chalcedon is insufficient. We therefore owe this debt of gratitude to the Christology of the Occident, and of the Reformers in particular, that it directed the theological view beyond that held in the Oriental Church and has led to a deeper and more meaningful significance of the Cross of Christ. In discussing the relation of the Eastern and Western Churches, Werner Elert in his *Der Christliche Glaube*, par. 60,⁴ points out: To overcome the separation between God and man more is necessary than an incarnation. Not only the miraculous union between God and man was necessary, but especially a hot and bitter conflict between the two estranged partners, between God and man, was necessary, a conflict which Jesus carried out through the sacrifice of His body, blood, and life. The mystery of Christ's presence, though it is unfathomable, does not fully exhaust the meaning of His incarnation. It is only in the mystery of His death that we understand what we possess in Christ.

6

Throughout its history the Christian Church has endeavored to present adequately and fully the reconciliatory act of God as it was accomplished in Christ's Cross and death. Stimulated by the wealth of New Testament statements, men have employed analogies from the social and even the judicial life of the people to present the work of Christ in a comprehensible manner. There is a tremendous array of attempts at interpretation, beginning with the so-called "ransom theory" of the ancient Church, the "satisfaction" theory of Anselm in his *Cur Deus homo*, down to Luther, and continued in the nineteenth century by the Erlangen theologian von Hofmann and in the twentieth century by Martin Kaehler and Herman Bezzel.⁵ However, we must keep in mind that no analogy which has been employed to expound this *theologia crucis* is able to exhaust the richness of the blessings which the death of Christ

⁴ The reference should undoubtedly be to par. 59, especially p. 412.

⁵ The American Lutheran theologian misses a reference to the Lundensian School, which has made much of the so-called classical theory of the Atonement, especially Aulén in his *Christus Victor*. The April issue of *Interpretation* devotes considerable space to some of the current views on the Atonement. Cp. Theological Observer in this issue (p. 705).

has brought upon mankind. Above all things we must guard against any attempt to explain the "illogical miracle" (paradox) of the forgiveness of God in a theologico-rationalistic manner in order to make, as it were, the books balance. In his *Die christliche Wahrheit*, 1948 (Vol. II, p. 25), Paul Althaus calls attention to the inadequacy and fallacy of all such attempts. The best that we can say to the glory of Christ the Crucified can only be expressed in a hymn of praise and in grateful acceptance of Christ's work. This may be done when we sing with the Church during Lent:

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to Thee
That Thou hast died to set us free;
Made righteous through Thy precious blood,
We now are reconciled to God,

or when we confess in our simple faith: Under the Cross of Christ my wounded conscience has found rest and infinite comfort. In spite of the limitations which hamper all theological interpretation, we are nevertheless confronted by the task to see clearly why only the death of Christ can heal the great separation between God and man. However, in endeavoring to understand the message of the reconciliation, we dare never forget that a mere spectator attitude is entirely inadequate. Only a heart which has experienced the terrors of conscience will approach the Cross in true faith and accept the reconciliation as a gracious gift.

A separation between two persons requires the intervention of a mediator. To bridge the chasm between the two, such a mediator must be in a position to represent and also to understand both parties. Anselm of Canterbury therefore concluded correctly that if man is to be helped in his dire necessity, God must become man. Since our extreme need requires a reconciliation between God and man, therefore the mediator must be able to represent both parties at the same time. He must be true God, and he must be true man, if a breach of such infinite dimensions is to be healed. When we study the picture of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, we gain the firm conviction that Jesus Christ in a unique and singular manner meets both qualifications of the Mediator who is to reconcile heaven and earth. In Jesus the eternal God appears among men. Christ could say of Himself, "He that sees Me sees the Father." Because He is the "express image" of God (Heb.

1:3), Jesus has plenipotentiary power to represent God's cause by divine authority. At the same time this Jesus is entirely one of us and has become like us in all things which concern body and soul, conflict and temptation. He who experienced the need of food and drink, sleep and rest, friendship and joy, in the same manner in which we require them; He who though victorious in the bitter warfare against temptation and sin, nevertheless experienced the full reality of this conflict, and that in a degree beyond our understanding: He understands us in all the phases of our earthly existence and can have sympathy with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15). Thus He is qualified to represent our cause before God as well as He is able to represent God's cause with us.

But how did Christ, this unique Mediator of whom our Catechism paradoxically predicates *vere homo* — *vere Deus*, fulfill His office here on earth? Since He is a Mediator, therefore we have to follow Him on His way to the Cross from the double aspect of what He endures in obedience to God's command and what He suffers for our welfare and in our stead.

God sent Jesus into the world in order to initiate in the name of God the conflict against the world. In its attitude toward Jesus the world manifests its true spirit. For that reason the world violently opposes this Word, it refuses to be convicted by the Holy Spirit. It refuses to come to God as the poor in spirit and to be blessed by His love. But God does not cease with His wooing and urging, and Jesus, whose will is completely at one with the Father's, keeps on wrestling for the spirit of man until His death upon the Cross.⁶

⁶ The author indicated above that the doctrine of reconciliation is so rich that no one analogy can do justice to it, so many-faceted that no one theologian can set forth all phases of it. The facet of the reconciliation which Professor Koeberle here emphasizes is Scriptural. In the U. S. A. this approach is probably not so meaningful because in America the opposition to the message of the Cross manifests itself largely in gross indifference. In Germany, however, before and since the war, the great masses have assumed a defiant attitude against the Gospel. For this reason Koeberle directs his audience to a facet which will arrest their attention and direct them to the heart of this doctrine. However, we must always keep in mind that a *one-sided* emphasis of some facet of a Scripture doctrine may lead to disaster. Horace Bushnell, for example, in his *The Vicarious Sacrifice* uses similar terminology to support his moral-influence theory and to deny the vicarious atonement, while it is Koeberle's sole interest to emphasize the *pro nobis*.

We dare never forget that what we have done to Christ in His passion we have done to God Himself. Whatever Jesus suffered from Gethsemane to Golgotha, that the very heart of God suffered, as the ancient fathers stated, *filius patitur, Deus compatitur*. God assumes everything Himself. He wrestles to the utmost for His holiness, and at the same time sacrifices Himself in defenseless love. He who had the power to destroy entire humanity in its rebellion refuses to carry out the judgment on those who have fully deserved it. If, however, judgment must take place, then He would rather place it upon the One who alone has deserved to remain free of wrath and condemnation. Now the guilty stand guiltless, and the only guiltless and just One, whose very life is a complete fulfilling of the Law, assumes the entire burden of the punishment. It is indeed a most marvelous exchange which occurs on Golgotha when God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). In this, that God spares us and Himself bears the burden of the sacrifice in His own Son, He gives us an absolutely convincing sign of His redemptive love. From the Cross, God calls and pleads: "Behold, ye sons of men, I am not your enemy, notice and understand that I am your Friend! Therefore I come to you not with power, with recompense, but only with the most tender signs of My love. Through the manger and the Cross I woo your hearts; be ye reconciled with God!"

Thus Christ stands before us in the sign of the Cross as He who executes God's cause in holiness and love, in judgment and mercy. At the same time He is our Advocate who represents us before God and addresses God as follows: "If the hour has come when Thy holy zeal requires judgment, then strike Me and not My brethren, I will bear it in their stead and suffer on their behalf. Behold My *brethren* from now on as *My* brethren; do not behold them as they are, but as they are secure under My protection."

Truly, Jesus deserves our worship, praise, thanksgiving, as the great Mediator, as the true High Priest, who has overcome the separation between God and man and has established peace. In His Cross full justice has been done to God's holy demands, and in Him God's will to save appears in resplendent colors. By His life and death, Jesus has again united what had been separated in the most terrifying manner.

7

The Christian Church lives in and by the accomplished reconciliation. As ambassadors for Christ we must employ the indicative mood, because we declare an absolute reality. The real treasure of the Christian congregation is to offer this redemptive activity of God in the proclamation of the Word and in the administration of the Sacraments. The State elicits our admiration because of its power and influence; art is intriguing because of its ability to find new modes of expressing the beautiful; philosophy captures man's interest by its astuteness in formulating problems. But greater than all these treasures of the mind is the Word of Reconciliation, the miracle of the forgiveness, and the certainty of our salvation for time and eternity.

The redemptive activity of God requires no increase nor complement. The terms "reconciled," "justified," "saved," are incapable of the comparative degree. For this reason the evangelical message rejects every addition in the sense of grace *and* merit, reconciliation *and* human propitiation. The reconciled sinner can sing only one song of gratitude and joy: "I have been redeemed from the burden of my rebellion." Not for a moment will he dream that the liberation from the depths of his rebellion is based on anything but on the completed work of Christ.

The Apostle Paul expresses the appropriation of the reconciliation by faith in the particularly felicitous phrase "justification of the sinner." "Justifying faith" accepts God's judgment over me which He rendered in the Cross of Christ; it affirms the overwhelming fact that God has abandoned His wrath, which I had merited; and it believes that God accepts me for Christ's sake, absolves me, and bestows upon me without any merit on my part His fellowship, in short, considers and treats me as a brother of Christ.

Only because Easter follows Good Friday, it is possible to comprehend this unspeakable certainty. Without Easter we would constantly be troubled by doubts whether Christ, after all, was not conquered in His terrific strife for our sake. In the resurrection of Jesus, God spoke His holy "Yes" to Christ's life. He who had been despised and rejected by the world is confirmed by God, is justified and exalted. As the resurrected One, as the Lord who is

the Spirit, Jesus Christ is present at all places and at all times with His cleansing and comforting Word, with the power that conquers our hearts and engenders faith and confidence in His person and mission. We know Him and love Him from the history of His earthly life as recorded in the Gospels. But we experience His presence also as members of His body and in union with Him as the Head.

Lutheran theology has always considered it important, yes, essential, that justifying faith be not confounded with the dynamic process of our moral cleansing and sanctification (*sittliche Heilung und Heiligung*). True, wherever the enmity against God has been removed, there the power of the redemption is immediately at work as a real liberation from our sinful bondage, our impotence and dependence under the tyrannical power of the demoniac forces. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life, there Christ bestows, in the language of the Church Fathers, *sanatio, renovatio, sanctificatio, nova obedientia, unio mystica personalis per fidem*.

Nevertheless Lutheran theology maintains firmly and properly that the imputed righteousness dare not be confounded with the regenerating grace, which begins to work in us toward the restitution of the divine image. In other words, the gracious gift of God's love in its magnificent glory is one fact, and the chapter dealing with our sanctification must be written on another page. The perfect and the imperfect, the "given" and the "becoming," dare not be expressed by the same word. The grace *for* us is greater than the grace *in* us, as John Tobias Beck has expressed it. Pardoning grace and infused grace (*Begnadigung und Begnadung*)⁷ are not identical in this world. It is therefore significant that Scripture always employs two words to show the connection and the distinction between justification and sanctification. In Psalm 103 we are asked to praise the Lord, who forgives all our sins *and* heals all our weaknesses so that our strength is renewed like the eagle's. Likewise St. Paul uses the conjunction "and" when he says that Christ has been made unto us for righteousness *and* sanctification. This maintains the distinction between the treasure of justification

⁷ Dilschneider in *Gegenwart Christi* points out that the first term describes the Scriptural-Lutheran and the second the Roman way of justification; cp. previous issue of C. T. M., p. 637.

and the gift of the new life, and at the same time the fragmentary character of our sanctification constantly points to the day when we shall participate in the full redemption.

8

Let us briefly illustrate what the reconciliation means for our personal faith life. The vital breath of true piety is prayer. It is often very difficult to pray, because we are tormented by the question whether we dare approach God, since we have so often forgotten and despised Him in our life. Through Christ the Mediator, however, we receive the joy and the liberty to approach God with all confidence and to address Him as dear children address their father. When we pray in the name of Jesus, the door to God's Paradise is again open, and no cherubim with a flaming sword dare forbid us entrance.

If the guilt question in our life has been solved, then we have the confidence that He who has helped us in our most dire necessity will provide all things in our life. In Rom. 8:32 justifying faith and our faith in the election are intimately united. The problem of theodicy, which today prompts many people to question the justice of God, can be solved only in the light of the proclamation of God's redemption and reconciliation.

Our reconciliation with God has wrought a radical change in the relation to our fellow man. Alienated from God, man leads a terribly egocentric life. He either does not see his fellow man at all because of his self-centered detachment; or if he sees him, he has a distorted view of him because of his lovelessness and prejudices. Does this dreadful reality not come to light constantly in the petty quarrels between spouses, members of the family, fellow workers? But when the Word of Reconciliation is active in our life, then we are able to bear with even the most unbearable, who not only places a burden on us, but on whom we also have placed a burden. In the shadow of the Cross we learn our common guilt, but experience also the common love of God. Being reconciled with God, having been received into the fellowship of Christ, we are enabled to forgive our personal enemy, lest through being unmerciful we again lose the treasure of the forgiveness of sins.

Christians serve God joyfully. But there can be no joy in our service in Christ's kingdom and for mankind's welfare unless we

are unencumbered by guilt and have solid ground under our feet. You cannot build a house with debts. My faith in the forgiveness of sins assures me that though I have often been a failure in my calling, I am nevertheless privileged as "an unprofitable servant," to glorify God in my life, because through the blood and righteousness of Christ I have been counted worthy and have been cleansed for the service of being a witness to God.

The highest form of serving God is the total commitment to the Church's world mission. The Savior's commission: Go into all the world, rests solely on the fact of a world reconciliation. Without this event there would be no ground and no occasion to send messengers of the Gospel into all the world and — this is implicitly associated with it — to "sacrifice" them for this mission. Neither our Occidental culture, which incidentally we have shamefully abused, nor the highly developed American standard of living gives us the right to approach the Eastern cultures in a spirit of superiority. The Indian Yoga religion, for example, has developed psychology and soul discipline to such a degree that in this area we are learners, not teachers, amateurs, not professionals. The only reason why we enter upon a program of world missions is the glorious reality that Christ's work of reconciliation is intensively and extensively all-sufficient. He who cannot personally witness to this fact in full confidence had better leave the work of world missions alone.

Our mission program, based on the universal reconciliation, rivets our eyes upon all nations. Ought we, however, not expand the circle to include the entire cosmos? Because of man's sin the entire creation was subjected without its will to infirmities (Rom. 8:20). But not only we who have experienced the first fruits of the Spirit, but also the whole creation awaiteth the redemption of the children of God (Rom. 8:22). Golgotha was the hour of the reconciliation not only between God and man, but also between God and the cosmos. That means that our physical life, yes, the life of the entire creation, is to be embraced in the great opportunities which God has established on the Cross.⁸ It is therefore

⁸ On this *crux interpretum* see Stoeckhardt, *Roemerbrief, ad locum*. He believes that in some manner the dumb creation will share in the glorious liberation of the children of God.

quite proper that crucifixes are erected on our hills and at the borders of grain fields not only to remind the tourist of the certainty that his guilt has been removed — the meaning is deeper — the crucifix is to remind us that in the death of Christ an event of cosmic significance has taken place, for we can now see God's favor upon the entire universe. For that reason we no longer need to be frightened by the mysterious powers of the universe, nor are we to be enraptured by its fascinating beauty, because we know Him who said to us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but . . . I have overcome the world." For that reason the question is apropos whether anthroposophy could have gained such a following among us if we had made more of the significance of Christ's redemption for the entire cosmos.⁹

In conclusion, a word on the relation of faith and the Christian's view of death. The charge is often made that Lutheran theology concentrates so much on the "blessed last hour" of the individual that it loses sight of the over-all history of the Kingdom. True, there is a danger in this regard, and we are indebted to Oscar Cull-

⁹ Anthroposophy as developed by Rudolf Steiner and as adopted by the newly organized "*Christengemeinschaft*" with headquarters in many larger cities of Germany, is currently making a strong appeal to the intelligentsia, particularly to the scientists. As the name indicates, it is an attempt to substitute human wisdom for divine revelation and faith. The advocates of this "human wisdom" attempt to unite all the sciences, such as biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, biochemistry, into a unified and all-embracing world view. In reality it is a glorification of man and his vaunted wisdom. In the "*Christengemeinschaft*" a "liturgy" has been developed, which, however, is not a service of God, but, according to their own terminology, is "*die Menschenweibhandlung*." They have adopted Goethe with his worship of nature as their patron saint. As far as we are able to tell, anthroposophy is closely related to some of our American theosophical cults, particularly "New Thought" and "Unity." Both anthroposophy and theosophy ascribe divine potentialities to man which enable him to participate in the creative forces of the universe. Both advocate occultism. Steiner, like Swedenborg, claims to have made excursion into the metaphysical realms, which are described in his book *Erkenntnis der hoheren Welten*. Occultism always appeals to frustrated people, and it is easily understood how the disillusioned German scientists would embrace Steiner's occult views. Both anthroposophy and theosophy believe that man is able by "soul discipline" and even through a series of reincarnations so to perfect himself that he will increasingly be able to use the secret powers of nature, such as the atomic energy, the cosmic ray. Naturally anthroposophy denies all the fundamentals of the Christian faith. It has no place in its philosophy for sin, the need of redemption, and the essence of salvation. Cp. Ernst Emmert, "Die lutherische Kirche und die Anthroposophie," *Jahrbuch des Martin Luther Bundes*, p. 126 f.; also CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, April, 1950, p. 310 f.

mann and Ethelbert Stauffert, who have reminded us again of a Christocentric theology of history. On the other hand, we must also keep in mind that death is a part of our existence, and everyone of us must meet and conquer death. In death each one of us will stand entirely alone. No one can take our place on this last journey. How great the anguish if we did not know where our anchor is firmly grounded. As we approach the end of our days, we shall become conscious of the unalterable fact that we cannot live our life over again, and then our conscience will remind us of all the sins of omission and commission. How important, therefore, that we have a message which can properly prepare people for dying! The crowning glory of Lutheran theology is that she has a message which enables people to go home in peace, because the burden of her message always is *reconciliation and justification*.

May God grant unto us as ministers of the divine Word that our consciences accept the Word of the Separation and our hearts embrace the Word of Reconciliation. Then we shall witness with divine authority to a God-estranged world of its reconciliation and reunion (*Heil und Heimkehr*) as a divinely accomplished reality.

Instructions to the Weak and the Strong According to Romans 14

By C. A. GAERTNER

ETERNAL vigilance is the price of Christian liberty which was restored to Christendom through the Lutheran Reformation.

Legalism and license always have been and still are the implacable foes of Christian liberty and ultimately of the Gospel itself. Since the Apostolic days church history is replete with instances where entire church bodies fell victim to one or the other. And the pity is that only too frequently matters of indifference, so-called adiaphora, served as the starting point from which either legalism or license sabotaged the priceless boon of Christian liberty. The Lutheran Church must therefore guard with especial care its great heritage of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel if it would retain its liberty.

Eternal vigilance must be the watchword also of the local congregation. It is on the congregational level where either legalism or license frequently manifests itself in determining the Christian's attitude toward purely indifferent matters. There may be honest differences of opinion in fixing the borderline between right and wrong in many of the problems which confront the Christian in his family, his social and business contacts, and even in his congregation and synod. Some of the Christians at Rome became exercised over the matter of whether or not it was permissible to eat certain types of meat. In our society Christians may clash in their views concerning such adiaphora as the proper observance of Sunday and "closed seasons," church rites, tithing, the frequency of attendance at the Lord's Supper, clerical vestments, forms of amusement which are *per se* not sinful. Lest the agitation over such and many similar adiaphora lead to the loss of Christian liberty and of the Gospel, pastor and people must carefully heed the instructions which St. Paul lays down in Romans 14. These instructions are based on inviolable principles and are as true today as when Paul penned them.

It must be noted at the outset that in this chapter St. Paul is dealing with real adiaphora. It is of course understood that under certain conditions the principle: *Nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandali* (Formula of Concord, Art. X) must be applied. For example, the form of applying water in Baptism, whether by immersion, sprinkling, or pouring is in itself an adiaphoron. We can therefore find no fault with a Christian if he, like Luther, prefers immersion. It is therefore certainly not unscriptural if under certain circumstances a Lutheran pastor would depart from the customary form of Baptism and baptize an adult convert by immersion. However, if he insists on immersion because of erroneous views concerning the essence and purpose of Baptism, then the form of Baptism ceases to be an adiaphoron and becomes a matter of confession. Immersion may also become a matter of offense, inasmuch as our Lutherans who rightly view the form of pouring as a confessional matter would be confused. Or take the case of liturgical forms, clerical vestments, and similar adiaphora. If the introduction of new forms causes our people to suspect that some un-Lutheran doctrine lurks behind the new ceremony, then ceremonies cease to be adiaphora because they cause confusion and may even become a scandal, an occasion for some Christian to lose his faith. In Romans 14, however, Paul is not speaking of such matters, but restricts his discussion to the Christian's attitude toward genuine and real adiaphora.

I. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WEAK BRETHREN

A proper application of the principles laid down by St. Paul requires that we know whom Paul has in mind when he speaks of "him that is weak in the faith." We frequently call those members "weak Christians" who are easily misled into sin, whose faith is weak, who are negligent in the use of the means of grace. However in Romans 14 the word *πίστις* does not denote the Spirit-wrought conviction that Christ is the Savior from sin. Here it is used to express ethical conviction, or moral persuasion. In other words, Paul is describing the weakness in knowing what a Christian may or may not do; or very simply, his failure to understand the essence of Christian liberty. They are fearful Christians lest they do wrong in something of which they are not sure. They are weak

brethren because they lack the Scriptural knowledge and understanding concerning indifferent matters, the adiaphora.

This interpretation of "weak in the faith" is the only one possible when we take into consideration the rest of this chapter. The weak brother is described as one who does not eat meat, but only herbs. He is afraid he may defile himself by eating meat. Possibly some of them had scruples concerning meat eating, because some meats were forbidden as unclean in the Ceremonial Law. Or perhaps some were afraid that the meat offered for food had been offered originally to some of the idols by the heathen and that therefore it might not be right to partake of it. Whatever the reason may have been, they were afraid they would sin by eating meat, or they thought that they could be spiritually stronger by refraining from meat eating.

Some of these "weak in the faith" are also described as people who selected special days of the week for prayers and meditations. They esteemed one day above another. These weak brethren considered it necessary to observe special days unto the Lord. They apparently were afraid that if they would not do this, the Lord would be displeased with them and they would endanger their faith. They considered this as essential for their own spiritual health and well-being.

Some of these "weak in the faith" also did not consider it right to drink wine, as is evident from the 21st verse of this chapter. Our chapter does not give us the reason why some felt it wrong to drink wine, but possibly, since many people abuse wine by overindulgence, they felt that the use itself was wrong. At any rate, it seemed wrong to them, and they were afraid that it was wrong. There were still other adiaphora not mentioned in this text which were a matter of concern to the weak brethren.

Thus those "weak in the faith" in our chapter are those who do not have a clear and full understanding of Christian liberty in things neither commanded nor forbidden in the Scriptures.

We should be careful not to confuse these weak brethren with the Judaizers who plagued so many early Christians with their insistence on the Ceremonial Law and taught that it was necessary for salvation. The entire Epistle to the Galatians is directed against

such as attempted to place the early Christians under the yoke of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law. These Paul considered false teachers. The brethren "weak in the faith" at Rome were in an altogether different class. They did not consider the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament binding in the New Testament Church. They only were confused on some of the things which were neither commanded nor forbidden. They did not want to make a mistake. To be on the safe side and to be at peace with their own conscience, they refrained from the full use of their Christian liberty.

The "weak in the faith" were true Christians. They were brethren with the others in the congregation, united in the saving faith in Christ. Their weakness was not such as to exclude them from the Christian fellowship of the congregation or to expose them to ridicule and denunciation and judgment. The very fact that these "weak in the faith" had such sensitive consciences in indifferent matters and were easily offended made it necessary that they should be given special consideration and be edified and built up and instructed.

We no doubt have members in our congregations who are "weak in the faith" in regard to adiaphora. The Apostle asks us to remember that while they lack a full understanding of Christian liberty, they are true Christians whose souls are precious in the sight of God. Such members today are frequently regarded as "problem members." They try our patience with their many questions and misgivings. Let us not ignore them nor neglect them. They are in need of patient instruction.

But Paul not only pleads for special consideration of the weak, but also addresses instruction and admonition to the "weak in the faith." If they do not wish to eat meat themselves, that is their business. If they feel that for their own spiritual life they need special days, no one will deny them that privilege. If they get along better without drinking wine, well and good. But in taking such positions, those "weak in the faith" must be careful not to let their weakness and lack of understanding lead them into doing wrong and sin. They do so, if they consider themselves better Christians than those who make full use of their Christian liberty. It is sinful if in an holier-than-thou attitude they refrain from eating meat or observe special days while they sit in judgment on

those who eat meat with thanksgiving to God and who esteem all days alike unto the Lord. They glory in their conscientious scruples instead of giving all glory to God. And that is sinful, in fact, that is teaching error — if not by word, then by example — for they set up their own scruples in indifferent matters as standards of holiness. A Christian congregation must rebuke them and endeavor to correct their sinful notions.

Paul expresses another principle in our text for the special benefit of the "weak in the faith." It is wrong and sinful for them to do something when they are not fully persuaded that it is permitted. He urges upon them that everyone should be fully persuaded in his own mind before he does something. Paul states that all things are clean in themselves and therefore are permitted for Christians. But Paul emphasizes for the benefit of those "weak in the faith" that if they consider something to be unclean, it actually is unclean to them and that therefore it would be a sin for them to make use of it. If a Christian believes that it is wrong for him to eat meat, or if he thinks it might be wrong for him to eat meat, or if he believes that it would hurt his faith to eat meat, then it surely would be sinful for him to eat it. St. Paul states: "All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense"; and again: "He that doubts, if he eats, is condemned, for it is not of faith. And everything that is not of faith is sin." The word πίστις here means that one must be fully persuaded and sure something is right and permissible before one does it. This is a general principle which is here addressed especially to the weak brethren lest they act contrary to their own convictions. The "weak in the faith" need such instruction. When leading members of the congregation do things that the weak consider sinful, or at least not wholesome, they may be tempted to follow the strong brethren's example and do things that seem wrong to them or omit to do things which seem necessary to them. Such action is sinful.

If the "weak in the faith" will follow these instructions, they will serve the Lord with joy and live at peace with their fellow Christians who make full use of their Christian liberty. As they grow in grace and in knowledge, they will become strong Christians also in respect to adiaphora. When they are fully persuaded that they have a right to change their minds in these matters, they will

also use their liberty to change their mode of living. No one should view them with suspicion for such a change, but rather thank God that they can now enjoy with a good conscience the many gifts of God.

II. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STRONG BRETHREN

Throughout the chapter St. Paul contrasts the "weak brethren" with another class, whom we are accustomed to describe as "strong brethren" (cp. 15:1). As the weakness of the weak brethren consisted in their failure to understand the Christian's liberty regarding adiaphora, so the strong brethren were strong inasmuch as they had the correct understanding of Christian liberty and made full use of it.

The strong brethren did not hesitate to eat meat, for they knew that it was not wrong in itself, and they were persuaded that meat eating in itself was not harmful to their spiritual well-being. These strong brethren realized that the Lord did not command them to set aside special days for private worship and meditation and therefore they simply regarded all the days unto the Lord and arranged their days as they saw fit and as it suited them best, leaving time, no doubt, on each day for prayer and meditation in God's Word. If they had a taste for it and enjoyed its use, they also made moderate use of wine without any scruples of conscience.

These strong brethren understood the Biblical principle expressed by Paul: "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself" (v. 14); and: "All things indeed are pure" (v. 20), or: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:4; cp. Acts 10:15). These strong brethren in the Roman congregation fully understood that when something is not commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God, it is left to the free choice of Christians to make use of it, or not to use it.

Thus the strong brethren usually made use of their liberty without all kinds of unnecessary restrictions and prohibitions. Such Christians were happy in the use of their Christian liberty and had a right to be (v. 22) because their conscience was at rest and did not condemn them in that which they allowed. They were not careless and indifferent Christians, but rather as well-informed

Christians they enjoyed the liberties of the New Testament children of God.

From the many exhortations of our text it is evident that the majority in the congregation at Rome had a correct understanding of Christian liberty. Most of the members of that congregation undoubtedly had no scruples about eating meat and drinking wine and ignoring the special days which some of the "weak in the faith" observed. Such a ratio of strong and weak members in this respect will be found in the average modern congregation. The "weak in the faith" in respect to the adiaphora are usually in the minority. And because of this fact the strong in the faith need to be cautioned to be careful of these weaker brethren. For that reason special instruction is also given in our chapter to the strong in the faith.

The first instruction to the strong is that they are to receive those "weak in the faith." When the strong constitute a majority in a congregation, they are apt to ignore those "weak in the faith" with their ascetic notions. St. Paul urges the strong Christians at Rome to receive into fellowship such "weak in the faith" and make them feel that they are a definite and welcome part of the congregation.

In the same sentence, Paul warns against the danger of speaking to the weak brother in a wrong spirit. The strong should not receive the weak for the purpose of condemning them in their weakness and passing sentence on their ideas of what is proper for their own good. Their weakness should not be a topic for constant discussion, nor should they be confused and bewildered and even driven to despair by a highhanded denunciation of their weakness.

The strong brethren are next admonished not to despise the weak brethren. It is so easy for one who feels secure in the exercise of his Christian liberty to look with contempt upon the timid and weak brother who seems to be afraid of doing wrong. The strong brother can so easily become the proud and disdainful brother, overbearing in his relationship with the "weak in the faith." The strong need to be warned against such a sinful attitude and be reminded that the Christian "weak in the faith" is just as much a precious child of God for whom Christ died and just as privileged a member of God's kingdom as he himself.

This warning against despising the weaker brethren is always

necessary in the Christian congregation. The strong are so easily inclined to ridicule the conscientious fears and scruples of the weak, forgetting that their derisive remarks and contemptuous jokes offend and hurt those weak in the faith. Instead of despising and condemning the weak brethren, the strong should be eager to show them consideration and make them aware of the bond of Christian love that exists between them as believers in Christ. The strong should be careful to edify the weak and build them up in their faith and in their understanding of the Word of God in all things.

Christian liberty gives to the strong not only the right to use those things which the weak may consider sinful, but it also imposes on him the duty to abstain from such use under certain conditions. St. Paul has this in mind when he writes: "But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." In the use of his Christian liberty the strong brother must be careful to remember that his weaker brethren in this respect may not fully understand his actions and be offended by them. For that reason he should judge his own actions with that in mind. Though he realizes that the enjoyment of his Christian liberties is right in itself, yet he should ask himself: Will my action offend my weaker brother? Will it cause him to be confused? Will it perhaps lead him into doing something against his own conscience? Will it lead him into sin? In that manner every strong brother is required to watch himself in the use of his Christian liberty when some weak brother is involved. Such a principle necessitates a constant evaluation of every exercise of Christian liberty in the presence of weak brethren.

Such consideration for the weak on the part of the strong certainly calls for love and Christian charity. It means that many times I would like to do something which is not wrong in itself, but I must refrain lest I offend a weak brother who has scruples about such action. If I enjoy meat for dinner, but find that a weak brother is occupying a seat next to mine in a public eating place and I know that he does not approve of meat eating for himself, then I should give him that much consideration that I enjoy with him his herbs and deny myself the pleasure of eating meat. If I invite to my home for a meal one "weak in the faith" who is afraid to eat meat and drink wine, it would be wrong for me to serve

good, juicy steaks with wine as an appetizer. I do not consider him right in his fearful attitude in regard to the enjoyment of these fine gifts of God, but my Christian love demands that I have consideration for his sensitive conscience in these matters.

"But if thy brother be grieved [injured spiritually] with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably" (v. 15). A willful lack of consideration for the "weak in the faith" in the exercise of Christian liberty is sinful, because it does violence to the law of Christian love. Regardless of what the result of that action is in the spiritual life of the weak brother, it would still be sin to act without Christian charity. Yes, such action may even prove fatal to the faith of the weak brother. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." These words make it clear that the proper and careful use of our Christian liberty in relation to those who are weak in the faith is a vital and important matter. Without the proper consideration in these matters, a strong brother can be responsible for the loss of a weak brother's soul. If a strong brother by such careless use of his Christian liberty can lead a weak brother to do something which the weak brother considers sinful, that is destructive of faith in Christ. Or it could happen that the stronger brother's action so confuses and bewilders the weak brother that he casts his Christian faith overboard entirely and forsakes his Savior. This may sound like an exaggeration, but Paul warns: "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." Again, in verse 20, we read: "For meat destroy not the work of God."

What should impress us all the more seriously in this discussion is that Paul reminds us that Christ died also for the weak brother. If the weak brother is lost, because a strong brother carelessly uses his Christian liberty, then Christ died in vain for that weak brother. Salvation is there for him, but he loses it, because a strong brother did not exercise brotherly concern and Christian wisdom in his use of Christian liberty. What is more important—to see his weak brother eternally saved in Christ or to enjoy his meat and wine and otherwise exercise his Christian liberty? In placing such charitable consideration on the conscience of the strong, Paul again repeats the principle: "All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eats with offense." This applies to the weak, but with

equal force to the strong. It is wrong for them to make use of their Christian liberty if thereby they give offense to the weak brethren.

This brings us to the important principle that things which in themselves are not wrong become wrong when their use causes offense or injury to those "weak in the faith." For that reason St. Paul states: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (v. 21). The strong will gladly refrain from the exercise of his Christian liberty, in order to safeguard the weak from spiritual injury. Such consideration, however, also implies that the strong instruct the "weak" in matters of Christian liberty. By precept and example the strong will edify the weak. If after proper instruction the weak is still unable to make use of his Christian liberty, the strong brethren should bear the infirmities of such a weak brother and cheerfully continue to deny themselves the exercise of their Christian liberty (15:1).

But does that mean that the strong brother can make no use of his Christian liberties as long as there are "weak in the faith" in the congregation? By no means; but he should follow such convictions before God (v. 22). He should enjoy these privileges before God and give God thanks for them. He should not parade his liberty before the weak. In reality, in not making use of the things indifferent in consideration of the weak, he is properly enjoying his Christian liberty, knowing that God approves his action.

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BOTH THE WEAK AND THE STRONG

In the foregoing we have considered passages in our chapter which deal in a special way either with the weak or with the strong brethren. Now we come to that portion of our chapter directed to both the strong and the weak. This is a most interesting section of our text and fundamental for the successful practice of the instruction given to both the weak and the strong.

Paul was anxious that there should be peace in the congregation in Rome and that everything in the congregation should work for the welfare of the Kingdom of God. He knew that trouble could easily arise between the weak and the strong in indifferent matters. Therefore he emphasized in this chapter that both the weak and the strong belong to the Lord and both were to serve the Lord

wholeheartedly. This exhortation and statement is the high point of our chapter.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Vv. 8-9.) St. Paul directs both the weak and the strong to Christ and His love for us. He explains that all Christians really belong to the Lord. The Lord Jesus died for all. He rose and revived for all. He is the Lord of all Christians, not only in so far as the one is weak or the other strong, but so completely that He is Lord of both the dead and the living. While a believer lives, whether he be weak or strong, he belongs to the Lord. The Lord watches over him and provides for him and guides him and keeps him. And when the believer dies, he still belongs to the Lord, for the Lord is his Savior even unto death. He takes him to Himself in heaven, and on the Last Day He resurrects his body gloriously. And thus the believer, living or dying, is ever the Lord's.

And since it is true that the believers, both weak and strong, belong unto the Lord always, therefore the believers do not live or die unto themselves, but unto the Lord (v. 7). The one aim and object in the Christian's life and death is to glorify God, even as Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). This basic principle solves all possible tensions which may arise between the strong and the weak brethren in matters of indifference. The one eats meat and drinks wine and gives God thanks for these gifts and thus lives unto the Lord. He observes all days alike and glorifies God by such action. On the other hand, the weak brother does not eat meat and refuses wine. He also strictly adheres to self-appointed special days. His action also is unto the Lord, and thereby he glorifies the Lord (vv. 6, 18).

Since both the weak and the strong live and die unto the Lord and are received and upheld by the Lord, they will therefore not judge one another any more (v. 13). It is entirely out of place for either to judge, condemn, and despise the other concerning the adiaphora, yes, it is beyond their province, for they are passing judgment on another man's servant, on Christ's servant. If Christ

is pleased with the weak brother, why should the strong brother despise him? If Christ receives the strong brother, why should the weak brother condemn him? After all, this is God's business, not the business of the weak or the strong (vv. 4, 10).

And in the final analysis, is there really any ground for judging and despising when both the weak and the strong really live and die unto the Lord? How can you criticize a Christian when he does everything unto the Lord? Instead of judging, let every Christian be concerned with his own conduct and live unto the Lord. He, after all, is the Judge of all, to whom we must give account. If both the strong and the weak Christians keep this in mind, they will avoid causing trouble and strife or giving offense.

But Paul has further instructions for both the weak and the strong. He warns both against making too much ado about eating or not eating. He tells them: "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (v. 17). The most important consideration in the Kingdom of God is not whether or not you ought to eat meat and drink wine. Such matters in themselves have no spiritual significance. It is foolish and wrong to place so much emphasis on these external matters that the real issues of Christianity are neglected and ignored.

All Christians, whether they are weak or strong, must remember that righteousness is of primary importance in Christ's kingdom. Paul is not speaking of the good works of Christians and their godly life, but he refers to the righteousness that the Christian has before God by faith in Christ Jesus. He refers here to justification. The most important question for the individual members of the Kingdom of God is "Shall I stand before the throne of God justified? Shall I be clothed in the accepted righteousness which Christ won for me on the Cross?" That consideration should occupy the Christian much more than eating and drinking and the other indifferent matters.

Paul also mentions "peace" as important in the Kingdom of God. Here he is not speaking of peace among nations of the earth, nor of peace among Christians in a congregation, important as both of those considerations are. He refers to the peace between God and

man by Christ, the Savior. This peace, which the world cannot give and which the believer has by faith in Christ, certainly should merit much more consideration in the Kingdom of God than meat and drink.

The same is to be said of "the joy in the Holy Ghost." The real joy in the heart of the Christian is not to be found in external matters as the liberty to eat and drink. It is rather that blessed work of the Holy Spirit which brings to the Christian the blessed assurance of forgiveness of sins and peace with God, fills him with comfort and hope in the Lord, and assures him of the mystical union. And this "joy" must receive more attention from the Christians than the matter of eating and drinking.

When Christians in a congregation forget these essentials of the Kingdom of God and wrangle over, and even cause divisions because of, indifferent matters, they not only do untold damage among themselves, but give offense to those outside the Christian congregation. Unnecessary quarrels and schisms among Christians concerning adiaphora give unbelievers occasion to speak evil of the Christian religion (v. 16). In his own ministry, Paul was extremely careful in these matters. When he was among weak brethren, he adjusted himself to their weakness. He did not permit these matters to weaken the bond of Christian fellowship and cause scandals among those without the Church.

Lest there be unrest in the congregation in these matters of Christian liberty and the essentials of the Kingdom of God be neglected and forgotten, Paul again reminds both the weak and the strong that the man who serves the Lord in these things is acceptable to God and approved of men. And then he continues: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Disagreement in the adiaphora should not be permitted to disrupt the peace of the Christian congregation. Both the weak and the strong should be careful in these matters to exercise such consideration for those of opposite opinion that both follow after the things that make for peace. Let each member's prime concern be that every other member possess the righteousness of God by faith in Christ and peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. Let each strive to edify the other.

IV. CONCLUSION

By applying the principles laid down by St. Paul, pastor and people of the modern congregation will avoid all forms of legalism or of license in dealing with adiaphoristic matters. There is always the temptation to employ legalistic measures in solving the problems which arise in connection with matters which are not specifically commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. As an example we refer to the question as to how frequently a Christian is to receive the Lord's Supper. We have those in our Church who commune every Sunday. The majority of our members do not commune so frequently. There is a danger that members of the one group will condemn, at least speak disparagingly of, members in the other group. Since the Scriptures do not clearly indicate how often a communicant should commune, the frequency is an adiaphoron, and no rule can be established by congregational legislation. The principles of our text must be applied.

Nor will a pastor and his congregation turn their Christian liberty into license. Many practical applications of this principle could be adduced. No pastor will, for example, abuse his liberty to wear clericals. In some sections of our Synod the wearing of clericals seems the proper thing to do. In others people may have an aversion to this custom. Expediency and the welfare of the church must determine the pastor's conduct in such purely indifferent matters. Under no condition will the pastor use his Christian liberty as a license to do what in itself is purely indifferent. This principle applies especially in our mission work. When a Lutheran congregation is established in a community which is predominantly Reformed, where the majority of the Christian people hold to the puritanical views of historic Calvinism, e. g., concerning the observance of the Sunday, cardplaying, etc., then the Lutheran Christians must have regard for these "weak brethren" until they can be instructed. We certainly have an obligation also toward these. This principle holds true in a larger and more direct manner in dealing with the unchurched whom we endeavor to gain for Christ. Many of them come from families with sectarian background and may have peculiar notions as to what a Christian, especially the minister, should do and not do. To such people the exercise of certain Christian liberties may be offensive. If a minister drinks

beer or smokes in their presence, he may lose their confidence and respect. We must therefore exercise caution, lest by a heedless use of Christian liberty we cause a soul, for which Christ died, to be lost.

Many more examples of modern adiaphora could be cited to show that the principles of Romans 14 have lost none of their relevance and need to be applied today in the same way as in the congregation at Rome. Let us so teach the Word of God that all our members will be "strong Christians," understanding their Christian liberty in things neither commanded nor forbidden. If a brother is "weak in the faith," let us bear with him and deal with him according to Christian charity and receive him into our Christian fellowship as a fellow servant of Christ. Adiaphora will then cease to be a problem, and all members of the congregation, the weak and the strong, will work together in a God-pleasing manner. Everyone will then live unto the Lord and die unto the Lord, holding precious as the essentials of his faith righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Brownsville, Tex.

Reflections of a Lover of the Scriptures and Nature*

BY AUGUST C. REHWALDT

ONE of the theses which Ayres¹ would nail to the laboratory door is: "That we can keep science and belief separate by relegating our religion to the Sabbath day." The implication of this seems to be that a man cannot at one and the same time be religious and scientific any more than he can be a child of the world and a child of God at one and the same time. Religion and science are incompatible, some think. But are they?

We have but one word to say to anyone who with his science, or because of his science, would relegate the Lord out of the universe: such a view is not scientific. Science can begin only after there are things, forces, energies, and a thinking mind to occupy itself with these things, forces, and energies. Science cannot begin before this. Religion can. Religion even goes on where science leaves off.

SUPERNATURAL NATURALISM

The religion of the Bible is meant, "supernatural naturalism,"² as Lewis calls it. This is not that sheer naturalism which admits nothing divine, but regards nature as an eternal self-development, which, if it has a God at all, has one who is not supramundane, but extramundane, and holds himself aloof from nature and the universe. Nor is theistic naturalism meant, which postulates a first cause to start the machinery of the universe. The God of the Bible not only gave us the first great beginning, but has since given other beginnings which could not have come without Him, and has

*) The author does not propose to offer the final solution of the problem arising from the Biblical view of natural phenomena and the view held by various scientific theories. Nevertheless his analysis should prove stimulating and suggest further investigation by the student of the Bible and the student of nature. — ED. COM.

¹ Ayres, C. E., *Science the False Messiah*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1927.

² Lewis, Tayler, "Special Introduction to the First Chapter of Genesis," Part IV. Schaff-Lange, *Genesis*, N. Y., 1871, 143—147.

made changes which could not otherwise have taken place. In the religion of the Bible the supernatural and the natural is ever present.

It is equally true that nature has meaning only then when we see the supernatural standing back of it. Without that, the study of nature "reveals more mysteries than it solves." Unless a man sees God standing back of all nature, he may look at the blue sky, and however blue and bright it may be, to him it will be sad and awful, and he will cry out with Carlyle: "A sad sight!" The unscientific Psalmist David stands under that same blue sky, which is without speech and words and audible voice, and exclaims: "The heavens declare the glory of God." An autonomous nature is terrible. There chance and probability reign supreme. There this might happen as well as that, or some other thing. On that scene, man appears for no reason whatever, is victimized for a few moments and disappears again, all for no reason or purpose. In such a world the blue heavens are indeed frightening. David, with his little science, knows and understands nature and is right at the heart and core of things, for he has read not only from the book of nature, but from the book of the Law, and so knows what many with all their science do not know, the God of love, who stands back of nature.

HARMONY OF SCRIPTURE AND NATURE

The God of love is the author of both the Book of Nature and the Bible. Contradictions between these two books are impossible, and since there is no strife and antagonism, we cannot speak of a reconciliation between them. There may be a conflict between the Bible and science, as when the term *science* is used to connote philosophical explanations. If a conflict seems to exist, its source is to be found in man. Sometimes willfully, at times with pious intentions, modern notions have been foisted on O. T. language; interpretations have been rendered which are out of harmony with the rest of the Bible; interpretations are based on ancient and obsolete science or on modern science; the representation of a fact is mistaken for the fact; and finally the Bible has been committed to some scientific theory—to mention in a general way the sources of trouble. We find most frequently that some philosoph-

ical science has been read into the Bible. If this science, in consequence of later and fuller investigations, was revised, science suffered but little thereby, but faith in the Bible was shaken, if not lost, particularly among young people.

The material given here *will offer little that has not been said before*, but it is hoped that it will in some manner be of aid to those who are called upon to guide and direct and assure particularly young men and women who are disturbed by doubts and misgivings arising from a misunderstanding of, or a failure to see, the harmony between the Bible and nature.

What is offered herewith is not intended for the conversion of the unbeliever. The treatment he needs is the plain Law applied, and without argumentation, followed by the Gospel, also applied without any argumentation. Argument will never convert a man. Law and Gospel will turn him face about. And again, what is offered here is not meant to be an outward prop of the Bible. The Bible requires no outward support, and habitual reliance on such outward props, even when sound and resting on truth, only weakens faith. True faith in the Scriptures must have its strength in the Scriptures themselves.

THE INFINITE THROUGH THE FINITE

If we let our thoughts sweep across nature and across the universe, looking for the most wonderful and awe-inspiring thing we can find, they must come to rest on the Bible before us. Nature indeed does tell us something of the Almighty, the All-wise, the Creator-God, but that knowledge, standing by itself, helps us men not at all. It only makes God the more remote and unapproachable for us, and fearsome. How different is the aspect of nature when we know and believe: "God is Love." Now all that before was so terrifying, so fearsome, so crushing to us, makes us feel secure and safe and sheltered. To reveal to us poor, lost men His eternal, rescuing, saving, keeping love, God has given us the Bible. Its message is comprehended in three words: "God is Love." Whatever else may be said of God, of His holiness, His justice, His righteousness, and all His other attributes, below it all, around it all, above it all, the periphery of it all, is Love. "God is Love." His very nature compels Him to reveal Himself to all men of all

ages, for He "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Using human agents, God has through His Holy Spirit produced the sacred Scriptures, in which through the medium of human speech, human experiences and pictures, and human emotions, even trite truths and sayings, He does reveal Himself to man who otherwise could know nothing of Him, or no more than the little which nature reveals of Him. As long as there are human mothers in this world with little babes in their arms, men can know of God's redeeming love, for laying hold of a common fundamental instinct, God says: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me." These sacred writings address themselves, in the first instance, to the most separate and peculiar people in the world, and yet, by drawing on elementary and fundamental human experiences, etc., common to all men, these writings have a most unique appeal to all peoples, all ages, and all individual men. The many translations bear this out.

Nature is one grand parable. Jesus saw it thus. The natural and the supernatural cannot be separated. They are inseparably intertwined and run through all the Scriptures from the genesis of the first earth to the appearing of the new. The natural and the supernatural cannot be separated when the great question of the unity of the race in its connection with the doctrines of the *fall*, of the *incarnation*, and of *redemption* is considered. The supernatural is made known through the natural. The Infinite reveals Himself to the finite through the finite. And yet, the primary object of divine revelation is not to extend our profane knowledge, i. e., the Bible nowhere is intended to give us strictly scientific knowledge. It draws in the natural as much as is needed to achieve its great purpose, no more. When a reference is made to nature, it is not merely casual, but the reference is needed to bring before the reader, or the hearer, some spiritual truth. Where such reference is made, Scripture deals with nature and natural phenomena in its own Scriptural way and uses a language that is universally understood, the phenomenal, or as some prefer, the phenomenational language.

PHENOMENATIONAL LANGUAGE

If I go to a photographer and have him make a portrait of me, what he hands me, some time later, is not I as a matter of fact, but a representation of me. We see facts, taste them, hear them, feel them, smell them, and as we do, a conception is formed of them, or a mind's image, which in distinction from the fact is a mere representation of the fact. If we perceive some fact, etc., and, as the conception, or mind's image, is formed, keep it stripped of all emotion we may experience, and allow no explanation of the fact to become a part of the mind's image, then the conception in our mind will be the same as will appear in any other. The mind's image of the fact will be universal. If we put such a universal conception, stripped of all emotion and explanation, in words, we have phenomenational language. The fact then is one thing, the representation of the fact is another. For example, we think of the act or process in nature which we all know as sunrise—but we dare not call it that, for then we have already passed from the observation of the fact to its interpretation. When this process mentioned before occurs in nature, the observer perceives through his sense of sight, and the image, or concept, is formed in the mind. The image formed in one mind will be the same as that formed in another, regardless of the observer's intellectual endowments. The sun rises in the morning. The sun sets in the evening. It would appear no different to Einstein than to an Egyptologist. Language, especially early language or primitive language, seeks to express this conception, or mental image of the fact, etc., in distinction from the fact and as a representation of it. *To use such phenomenational language in saying "the sun rises" does not commit the speaker, and we may add, the Bible, to any astronomical system, nor to any scientific explanation of the fact,* but it is merely the representation of the fact by the universal image formed in the mind. If a poet should observe a sunrise, he might desire to let the emotion which he experiences modify his representation of the fact, but since not all would have the same experience, he would no longer be devising language which is universally understood, i. e., it would not be phenomenational language. A scientist observing the same phenomenon has a scientific explanation of it which may affect the manner in which he represents the fact verbally. He would be

devising specialized language which would not be universally understood. Of course, both of the latter two may find it convenient to let the matter rest in the phenomenational representation of the fact, reserving for themselves the right to make any mental elaboration or correction of this representation.

All language begins with such imaging. After long use and wear a language loses more and more this richness and freshness which goes with such imaging, and, finally, what was once an image representation comes to stand for thoughts or facts, or physical agencies without such conceptual representation. Thus, much of a language gradually becomes lifeless like the x and y of the mathematician. Thus, much of a live language may be dead, and a dead language may be much alive, as is the case with the original languages of Scripture. With respect to nature the Bible uses the phenomenational language, without committing itself to any scientific explanation or theory, which may at times need revision and readjustment.

SCIENTIFIC LANGUAGE

Scientific language always strives to be descriptive rather than philosophic. A process once initiated may involve a long chain of steps, each one of which may be started by a cause or a secondary cause which issued from a previous step which has just reached its completion or has progressed sufficiently far for the succeeding step to begin. The chain reaction of the atomic pile might be mentioned as an example, or the particles of powder in a fuse may furnish a more simple example. Here in the fuse particle "a" is first ignited and starts off "b," etc., until the cap is reached. The process which develops in the cap or in the final explosion may again involve many steps and secondary causes. Scientific language seeks to describe cause and effect, secondary as well as primary, and, strange to say, cannot always cut itself loose from phenomenational language. Thus sunrise, in scientific language, would involve the earth's orbit, revolution, rotation, planetary motion, gravitational attraction, etc. The object is to explain the relation of phenomena to each other and to trace their connection all the way up to the ultimate truth or agency. If such a scientific explanation stays within its sphere of operation, which is confined to things, energies, forces, it must stop short of the ultimate.

Stopping short of that, the human mind by its very nature is restless, impatient with its own shortcomings, is anxious for more, and may attempt to supply by speculation what is outside its reach. Not infrequently, scientific explanation merely chops a larger mystery into any number of smaller ones, each one of which may be left unsolved or unexplained. Knowledge may be somewhat extended by this latter process, but the ultimate truth and agency always remains unattainable.

Lest such statements give the impression that we seek to disparage scientific thinking, we would add that we are merely being honest. We respect true science and logical thinking too much to indulge in slighting them, but we do regret misuse and abuse of them. The mind and intelligent thinking are a gift of God, which, like the daily bread and sunlight, are bestowed alike on the good and on the evil. If some abuse these gifts of God, this does not oblige the Christian man to starve himself physically and intellectually. A Christian can be a Christian man and an intelligent man at one and the same time. Moreover, unless we completely misunderstand Christ's word Matt. 22:37, and Cremer's comment on the word "mind," then intellectual processes are challenged by spiritual things. Rom. 12:2 Paul speaks of the "renewing of your mind," which implies that also intellectual faculties are elevated and ennobled and are put to use in the King's service. Abuse of intellectual gifts we regret, but we do not disparage or slight them because they are intellectual. Nor would we summarily condemn the "scientific method," for there is a sphere in which it operates legitimately, but if it is applied to religion, to morality, to ethics, or to spiritual things, as is so frequently done not only by the sciences, but also by the social sciences, called "science" for the sake of prestige, then it is misapplied and has lost its usefulness.

SCIENTIFIC LANGUAGE IS NOT EMPLOYED BY THE BIBLE

The Bible does not employ "scientific" language, for the use of such language would constitute the Scripture's endorsement of the theory and philosophy back of such language, would underwrite the correctness of such theory and philosophy. Science cannot claim such endorsement because phenomenational language is used in the Scriptures. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word

shall not pass away." No matter how much scientific explanation may change, be revised, or discarded wholly, as new discoveries are taken into account, new hypotheses are devised, the phenomenon as it is perceived by the mind will not change. The appearance of a fact stands, however much the scientific explanation of the fact may change. No scientific explanation, no philosophy can impeach the authority of the Scriptures in things physical.

In our translations and in our exegesis the phenomenational language of the Scriptures is sometimes weakened or dimmed or obscured. We cannot rid ourselves of the feeling that it had been better not to translate at all such words as *raqia*, *yom*, *min*, *olam*. We dare not use *species* when we mean *min*. Luther's "*Art*" may serve, but even the "*kind*" of the Authorized Version is hardly adequate.

By way of comparison we shall let Genesis 1 furnish a word or two from the phenomenational language of Scripture. We shall then supply equivalents from the scientific terminology, and finally we shall draw from other parts of the Bible words used for the poetical version. *Firmament*, *sky*, *water* "above and below the firmament" mean the same in simple phenomenational language that *atmosphere*, *rarefaction*, *condensation*, *reflection*, *refraction* would represent in the scientific. In poetical language the Bible renders the same remote facts as: *treasures*, *storehouses*, of rain, snow, hail; *molten-looking glass*, *curtain*, *tent* are used for sky. All speak of the same fact, each in its own way, and the poetical language touches upon our emotions besides.

IN SOME INSTANCES SCIENCE IS FORCED TO USE PHENOMENATIONAL LANGUAGE

Even an exact science such as physics cannot dispense with phenomenational language, nor can the even greater astronomy. On visiting the Adler Planetarium at Chicago one hears such phenomenational language as *sunrise*, *sunset*, *the stars set*, *eclipse*, etc. The great Newton in the attempt to define such a fundamental thing as *force* could do no better than to say, "force is a push or pull." He set out to describe force, but force, whatever it is, is ineffable. So the best that Newton can do is to tell what force does or may do to matter. It may push or pull it. That is the mind's

image of force, something else in motion because of it. Our language, also our scientific language, cannot shake itself loose from the representation by appearances, that is, the phenomenational language. Some scientific terms are so far from being "scientific" that they are amusing, e. g., *phrenology*. We might also add such terms as *cell*, and *vacuole*, and for still more we might turn to Gray's *Manual*.³ The scientific names of the members of the botanical world abound with the language of appearance. If, then, science cautions us not to mistake the mind's image-representation of the fact for the fact, we shall gladly accept this cautionary word, it is well spoken; and we on our part shall turn to science and to all who are critical of the Scriptures, as well as any who would interpret the Sacred Writings, and caution them all not to mistake the mind's image-representation of a fact for the fact, which is ineffable, nor to put modern notions nor modern science where it has no place.

JOSHUA 10:11-14

We take the passage Joshua 10:11-14 just as it stands without entering into any discussion not along the line of phenomenational language. The question which this passage often raises is whether it teaches an astronomical system. Some think it does.

We begin with verse 14, "For the Lord fought for Israel," and we shall also draw upon verse 8, "There shall not a man stand before thee." With these words the Amorites were doomed. That was the will of God, and we need say no more on this point. The Amorites were to be destroyed by the instrumentality of the men of Israel. The Israelites were to be God's executioners. He might have used angels or Satan, as He did on other occasions, but He chose instead the men of Israel. Nor need we inquire why the one agent is preferred to the other. Very pertinent to our discussion is the fact, as the events of the day demonstrated later, that this particular assignment was more than Israel could accomplish in the remaining hours of light on that particular day, had there been no divine interference. This feature may have been God's subtle way of keeping Israel mindful of the fact that they were

³ Gray's *New Manual of Botany*, American Book Company, the best-known taxonomic key to the flowering plants and ferns of the central and northeastern United States and adjacent Canada.

merely instruments and that "the battle is the Lord's." Joshua saw that daylight was running short of Israel's need for it, and so he asked for more. There followed a strange and inexplicable lengthening of that particular day.

If God purposed to preserve a record of this day with its pertinent incidents for posterity, He would have to address Himself to human minds, through human agents and processes, that is, He would have to come down to human level. He might take us up as He took up Paul to the third heaven, but we could not understand the language spoken there, and what we there heard would be unutterable here below. He comes down to our level and uses the simple language of appearance to describe the phenomenon connected with the physical agent or the supernatural divine act, whichever was back of the lengthening of that particular day. The sun appeared to stand immovable in the sky, so Scriptures say, "The sun stood still." No one can fail to understand that this day was lengthened in some inexplicable manner, and such understanding is independent of any astronomical or planetary system. If today we were to make a similar experience and were to report it, we would, no doubt, use the same words. To designate it simply as a lengthening of the day would fail to bring out the preternatural, for we speak of a lengthening of the day each spring. We would say, "The sun stood still." The whole incident is recorded so that we may know that the Lord will keep His promises. Is. 38:8; 2 Kings 20:11; Ps. 19:5-6 employ the same language by implication.

PSALM 29

Throughout this twenty-ninth Psalm we find such phenomenal representation. We at first hear the thunder, "the voice of the Lord," muttering in the north as the storm gathers, then crashing overhead, as the storm center passes, and finally we hear it growling in the south, where the storm expends itself. All is presented as a demonstration of the power and the majesty of God, who took His place as King and Judge uncompromisingly against sin and evil at the time of the Deluge. All similar minor acts, such as storm and tempests, solemnly remind us that "the Lord sitteth King forever," unchanged in His attitude toward sin and transgression, which gives each thundercrash an awful significance. After the storm has rolled away, the sun breaks forth and the

bow appears on the clouds, as it were, for we hear the congregation singing: "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." Through Christ this strength and peace are imparted to the people of God. That is a brief summary of the Psalm.

Seven times we hear "the voice of the Lord," that is, the thunder. That is the universal conception of thunder, that some higher being is speaking. Primitive man will strike his breast when the thunder rolls across the plain and cry out: "The gods are angry; a god has spoken." Our primitive ancestors sensed this too and had their Thor. We have our Thursday. Some of the cruelest and most inhuman of the Roman despots hid under the bed when the thunder snarled overhead, we are told. No matter how much science you may have in you, it cannot obliterate this primitive conception of thunder, and no amount of bravado and philosophical boasting can do away with the impression that God is indeed near to us in the thunderstorm, however distant He may seem in other operations in nature.

Thunder is a noise that any little child of today can explain, perhaps in scientific terms. To call thunder "the voice of the Lord" is unscientific. That is correct. But the Psalmist is not interested in the scientific. He has higher ideas to occupy him. He is speaking of the First Cause, God, and its final effect as we perceive it with our senses, thunder, and he makes no attempt to explain what goes on between first cause and effect. It is the sphere of science to explain that. Thunder is "the voice of the Lord," however many secondary causes may operate before it reaches our ear.

We know all about electricity and lightning and thunder. We may generate all the electricity we please and use it to drag our freight across the mountains and power our industry and send inane programs across the air; but that is no reason why we cannot reverently and devoutly repeat the words of this Psalm with David. We shall let the physicists discover all they can about electricity and thunder and lightning and rarefactions and condensations, and let them tell us all about it. We shall make it our own and put it to use, and, then passing from nature to a higher plane, we shall hear Jehovah speaking in the thunder and in the storm. This Psalm, like the whole Bible, begins where science leaves off.

Milwaukee, Wis.

A Series of Sermon Studies for the Church Year

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

LUKE 13:10-17

The Text and the Day.—Our text plays the theme in sharps which the Standard Gospel for the day gives in flats, and thus the text serves well to strike a new key on the well-known theme that should catch the ear of the hearer.

Notes on Meaning.—There are no exegetical difficulties in this text. It may be well, however, to carefully note all the details and thus lift out the striking incident in the text. Note: Jesus was the Guest Speaker "in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath," v. 10. He carefully observed the worship part of the Sabbath ordinance. And what a zeal for churchgoing, v. 11, when among the audience there is a woman "bowed together," who "could in no wise lift up herself." The "behold" seems to express surprise over it. Had she made excuses because of her infirmity, no one would have questioned it. Note, also, that v. 16 brands her infirmity as Satan's work. The old devil has his fingers in all the miseries of life, even if, as in this case, he has to be satisfied with the affliction of bodily deformity without touching the moral nature. Nor does he hesitate to trouble the children of God, for note that Jesus calls this woman "a daughter of Abraham," which surely means more than simply that she was a Jewess. But what a love and grace of the Savior, vv. 12 and 13, when, unasked, Jesus calls this woman, lays His hands on her, and miraculously straightens her crooked back. God's love is its own motive! Unasked, unsought, Heaven sent a Savior! Note, also, how wisely Jesus stimulated in her, yes, literally handed her, a faith by which to straighten her bowed form. First, the call that brought her to Him (she could not mistake His special attention!), then the word of assurance, "Thou art loosed from this infirmity," and finally "His hands on her" to give the needed confidence. Indeed, "she was *made* straight" and did not do it herself,

but the lifting and straightening of that crooked back was done in faith. Don't miss it in v. 13 that the woman "glorified God." They who wait on Him often find more than they expect in His house, and would have to be tongue-tied not to glorify God.

V. 14. "Note the blindness and coldheartedness born of religious formalism. This synagog official has no eye for the beauty of Christ's pity, no heart to rejoice in the woman's deliverance, no ear for the music of her praise. All that he sees is a violation of ecclesiastical order. That is the sin of sins in his eyes. He admits the reality of Christ's healing power, but that does not lead him to recognition of His mission. What a strange state of mind it was that acknowledged the miracle and then took offense at its being done on the Sabbath! Note, too, his disingenuous cowardice in attacking the people when he meant Christ. He blunders, too, in his scolding; for nobody had come to be healed. They had come to worship; and even if they had come for healing, the coming was no breach of Sabbath regulations, whatever the healing might be." (Alexander Maclaren.) To get the full force of the Lord's reply in v. 16, one must read the lengthy and minute rules for leading out animals on the Sabbath as set forth in the Talmud.

Preaching Pitfalls.—Not even the ruler of the synagog could find a pitfall any more for a false emphasis in that incident. His standing openly ashamed in that synagog, v. 17, was a thorough acknowledgment of the Lord's Gospel emphasis throughout that service.

Problem and Goal.—"There are plenty of people like this stickler for propriety and form (the ruler of the synagog), and if you want to find men blind as bats to the manifest tokens of a divine hand and hard as millstones towards misery, and utterly incapable of glowing with enthusiasm or of recognizing it, you will find them among ecclesiastical martinets, who are all for having 'things done decently and in order,' and would rather that a hundred poor sufferers should continue bowed down than that one of their regulations should be broken in lifting them up. The more men are filled with the spirit of worship, the less importance will they attach to the pedantic adherence to its forms, which is the most part of some people's religion." (Alexander Maclaren.)

Outline:

THE MASTER LAYS ON HIS HANDS

- I. He lays them in mercy on a soul bound by Satan.
- II. He lays them in judgment on a Church bound by a religious strait jacket.

A. W. SCHELP

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JOHN 9:39-41

The Text and the Day. — The Gospel for this day has the challenging question "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" The Epistle underscores the grace of God through which the Corinthians were called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Collect ascribes all spiritual life and activity to God. The text before us ties in with these thoughts, inasmuch as it teaches that our attitude toward Christ determines our spiritual relation with God and that the right attitude is a gift of God's grace and power.

Notes on Meaning. — The context must not be ignored, for v. 39 sums up all that has gone before. Jesus is now giving the interpretation and is making the application of the scene before Him. No one specifically is addressed. Christ's words are for all that may hear. "Judgment," not the act of judging, but the carrying out of a judgment, i. e., putting a judicial separation into execution. As Jesus comes into the world, then and now in the Gospel, men take and must take an attitude toward Him. Two classes of people result: they who see not but see, and they who see but are made blind. The former are they who by nature are spiritually blind but who receive spiritual sight by accepting Jesus as their Savior. The latter are they who by nature likewise are spiritually blind but who boast of their spiritual sight, scorn Jesus and His sight-giving gifts, and do not come to faith. V. 40. — "Are we blind also?" can be paraphrased: "Certainly Thou dost not mean to say that we, the religious leaders, also are blind and must come to Thee for sight?" V. 41. — "If you were blind," in the sense of having no spiritual sight like the blind man, there would be some chance of healing your blindness. But you are no longer spiritually blind in that sense, you are deliberately closing your eyes, and that is your sin. You "say," i. e., assert, declare. In your conceit you imagine

that you have spiritual sight, and therefore your sin remaineth, viz., the sin of rejecting the Light, the sin of unbelief. This sin remains with all that it involves. And this is the judgment upon all sinners who do not repent.

Preaching Pitfalls.—Note that both the blind man and the Pharisees were by nature spiritually blind and had no innate ability to accept Jesus as their Savior. The same Savior spoke to them, Jesus Christ with His divine love, grace, and power. That the blind man came to faith was due to divine grace. That the Pharisees remained in their spiritual blindness and did not believe in Jesus was due to their willful stubbornness. They loved darkness rather than light.

Preaching Emphases.—The text is a call to repentance and a warning to all. Are we given to spiritual smugness? Are we guilty of dead orthodoxy? If "now we see," then we have reason for much humility and for acknowledgment of our Savior's healing mercy, and we should diligently use the means by which our spiritual sight is sustained and strengthened.

Problem and Goal.—Christ is the touchstone of humanity, Luke 2:34; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 1 Peter 2:7. What men think of Jesus is the question, and the only question, which decides their spiritual condition before God.

Outline:

THE JUDGMENT FOR WHICH CHRIST IS COME INTO THE WORLD

I. They which see not shall see.

- A. The young man was blind, both physically and spiritually.
- B. He was given physical and spiritual sight by Jesus.
- C. This was a gift of Jesus' grace and power.

II. They which see shall not see.

- A. The Pharisees were religious people and boasted of their spiritual discernment.
- B. They rejected Christ in unbelief and thus were confirmed in their spiritual blindness.
- C. Their continued spiritual blindness was not the fault of Jesus but their own.

WALTER A. BAEPLER

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 10:40-42

The Text and the Day. — The text is in keeping with the day's Epistle, which exhorts the Christians to put off the old man, to put on the new man, and to labor, working with their hands the thing which is good. — Also with the Gospel, which tells of the faith of those men who brought a man sick of the palsy to Jesus and who were thus instrumental in procuring divine healing of soul and body for the doubly afflicted. Matt. 9:1-8.

Notes on Meaning. — The text is the conclusion of the inaugural address which the Lord delivered to His twelve disciples as He commissioned them to be laborers in the spiritual harvest among the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. 9:36—10:6. He directed them to be heralds of the Kingdom of Grace now at hand, to perform miracles of mercy upon occasion, to place their trust in the Lord for their sustenance, to expect favorable and unfavorable reaction to their activity, and to await help, comfort, and protection from the Lord in the performance of their various missions. Matt. 10:7-39. Then in the text, vv. 40-42, He encourages them by assuring them that as they labored, they would be the beneficiaries of tokens of love and esteem, which would not remain unrewarded.

V. 40. — The Father sent Jesus into the world. This was a single act. Jesus sent His Gospel messengers into the world. The sending and receiving of these messengers goes on and on. They are welcomed as the Lord's ambassadors not only to house and board, but also their message is taken into the heart and life by faith, because they proclaim the mercy of divine forgiveness, bring men back to God, and thus are the true peacemakers in the world. Luke 10:16; John 17:18; 20:21; 2 Cor. 5:20.

V. 41. — Befriending the representatives of Christ insures the reward of grace to those who do the befriending, even if the befriending is done by an ordinary Christian, one who is righteous by faith. The expression "in the name of" occurs three times in the text and means receiving a prophet, or a righteous man, or a disciple in view of his exalted office, special work, or particular qualifications, especially since each in his own manner or sphere is a bearer of eternal

truth. A prophet does his proclaiming publicly. This designation indicates the possession of courage, zeal, and the power of persuasion. Luke 1:76. A righteous person not only preaches the righteousness of faith but is himself a notable example of the resultant life of righteousness. Luke 1:6. A disciple distinguishes himself by following the Lord in all humility and constantly learning of Him. John 8:31-32. In all three capacities the disciples give more than they receive from their hearers.

V. 42. — Even the most insignificant service rendered to one of the Lord's disciples, who may be little in rank or influence, shall not lose its reward. It is in safe keeping with God. The measure of the reward will depend upon the motive in which the service was rendered. It will, of course, be a reward of grace and not one of merit. (Luke 17:10). The Christian workers will enjoy a foretaste of this reward in this life already when they "grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18. In eternity the reward of grace will come to a glorious perfection. Matt. 25:34-40. It will be "his" reward according to the measure of the service rendered to the Lord's disciples. 2 Cor. 9:6.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Much depends upon the talents and abilities of the minister, but more depends upon the fact that he is a believing and humble disciple of Christ, who seeks the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. — The context shows that "these little ones" of v. 42 are not children of minor age.

Problem and Goal. — To exalt the ministry of reconciliation, especially the faithfulness of ministers and the service rendered by all church members to facilitate and expedite the work of the ministry as it becomes more complex in these latter days.

Illustration. — The service rendered by the widow to the Prophet Elijah, 1 Kings 17:8-16; by Obadiah, who fed one hundred prophets of the Lord, 1 Kings 18:4; by Lydia to the Apostle Paul, Acts 16:14-15; Gaius, fellow helper to the Truth, 3 John 5-8. — A Swedish princess sold her diamonds to help build a hospital. When visiting this hospital after its completion, a suffering inmate wept tears of gratitude as she stood by his side, and the princess exclaimed: "Ah, now I see my diamonds again!"

Outline:

THE IMPERISHABLE GOOD WORKS OF CHRISTIANS

I. Divinely Motivated, v. 40.

- A. The divine source: The Father sent His Son. The Son sends His messengers.
- B. These proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom which works faith and motivates good works.

II. Gratefully Performed, vv. 41 a, 42 a.

- A. The messengers of the Lord are welcomed for their work's sake.
- B. Even the lowliest of them are provided for.

III. Eternally Rewarded, vv. 41 b, 42 b.

- A. The love shown to the prophetic messengers will be a wellspring of eternal blessings beginning in this life.
- B. "Verily" — thus spoken to stimulate all acts of charity and to destroy doubts as to the eternal reward of grace.

 HENRY C. HARTING

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 5:43-48

The Text and the Day. — God's righteous, yet merciful, nature is such that it deserves the highest praise (Introit) and sanctified service (Collect). This is rendered by Christians who have the proper wedding garment (Gospel). They glorify Him by a circum-spect walk (Epistle), an outstanding feature of which is the spirit of Christian love (text).

Notes on Meaning. — Our text is the last of a series of six illustrations on the requirements of God's Law. Like the rest, ours has its "Ye have heard" and "But I say unto you," but it contains the most penetrating point of all, indeed the very "Sum of the Second Table."

V. 43. *Love thy neighbor.* Significant omission of *as thyself*. Cp. Lev. 19:18. God intended not so much to limit the *objects* of love as to indicate the *standard* of love. The rabbinical change opened up the question "Who is my neighbor?" and then limited

the word, finally even permitting hatred of others (racial, national, religious enemies; Samaritans, Gentile "dogs"; personal foes). Though appealing to natural man, this inference has no Scriptural warrant. Neighbor (lit. "nigh-bor," πλῆσιον, a near one), according to Jesus, is everyone, especially those needing our love; and who may need that worse than our enemies?

V. 44. *I say*, appealing to His authority as divine Lord of the Law. *Love*, ἀγαπάω, more than affection (did even Jesus *like* His enemies?), the love of comprehension and high purpose, seeking the welfare of even the undeserving, the unlovely. Of course, such love is divine (vv. 45, 48), but is to be found in believers. Even persecutors belong into the circle of "nigh-bor." — The Christian does all he can to show such love, then enlists God's help besides, namely, in prayer, ὑπέρ, on behalf of, for the benefit of others. Cf. Jesus' intercessory prayer on the Cross, Stephen's; the Christian's only revenge. (Note that best texts omit "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you . . . and despitefully use you" as probably imported from Luke 6:27 f.)

V. 45. The purpose clause contains the implication as to the source of such love in our hearts, namely, our family relationship to God. "God's sons are to be God-like." Children we are now, but this becomes a settled, demonstrated fact (aorist punctiliar subjunctive) through the evidence of our loving others. Cf. v. 9. — God's love should be sufficient motivation, but also His example can show us the need for such love: His sun it is, made and still controlled by Him; yet He causes it to shine on both classes of men, regardless of their attitude toward Him. So with the rain. Why is this? His ἀγάπη is the answer. For the justified He intends pure blessing; for the unjustified (emphasis here), goodness to lead them to repentance (Rom. 2:4); in both instances, purposeful love. We are to be like-minded. Even to *our* enemies.

V. 46 f. Dramatic questions, shattering the false views of those who limit love. *Salute*, the Oriental show of affection, no mere casual "Hello." Reserve affection for our own, and we sink to the level of the despised publicans, yea even of heathen and criminals. What *reward*, then? what recognition by God?

V. 48. No, be *as your Father*, not so much in degree or quantity of love which would be impossible, but in the kind and quality of

love. *Perfect*, complete, whole, mature. "God is what His sons aspire to be" (*Expositor's Greek N.T.*). God never sinks below the ideal. We are ever to strive toward it.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Our text is from the Sermon on the Mount, is Law, not Gospel; not the way of salvation, but a description which is to guide those on that way. — Yet perfectionism is not the lesson, even from v. 48. Rather even the "best" Christian will be led to recognize his unworthiness, his need for more of God. — On the other hand, "love your enemies" is not an elective, is not optional, for the Christian, or perhaps a mark of only the most saintly.

Emphases. — This text offers opportunity for the hearer to gauge his own love: is it better than others'? Is it worthy of our "Father which is in heaven"? Then, recalling our Father's love, which made us His own, we shall increasingly endeavor truly to *be* His children. The reference to the Father-children relationship gives the key to the needed Gospel emphasis. Use Romans 5 and 1 John 4 to expand the thought.

Problem and Goal. — Much that passes for love is only glorified selfishness. Christian love is far higher, is capable of loving even enemies. Secondary goal will be to make all aware of the requirements of their new relationship. That will help reach the primary goal, which will be to point them anew to God's ἀγάπη, which will enable them to become better channels of that same love toward others, indeed even their enemies.

Illustrations. — How love disagreeable neighbors? "By loving God so much we are willing to let Him love them through us. That's how the missionary loves the heathen — not because they are lovable, but because God so loved. . . . When we talk about loving our neighbors, we are beginning with the second commandment. Why not begin with the first one, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind'? That includes all there is of a person, and to the person who has so yielded his life and his love to his Lord, love to his neighbor is possible, because he has lost his self-love." (*Sunday School Times*, 3-3-45, page 159.)

"A heart is shaped somewhat like a funnel. The heart that re-

ceives the love of God will funnel that love into a cold world" (Mahler in *St. Louis Lutheran*).

At the close of the Civil War, General Robert E. Lee said that he never once during the long conflict harbored a feeling of hatred toward his enemies.

One learning to drive an automobile quickly masters steering, shifting, etc., thinks it easy. Have him try the crowded highway, and he will say: "If it were not for the other people. . . ." Some requirements of the Christian life are relatively simple; if only it were not for the other people, especially our enemies!

Outline:

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES!

Christianity's most difficult requirement, "Love your enemies." Yet not to be ignored or rejected as visionary, impossible. Rather listen to Jesus and learn!

I. A searching test: "What do ye more than others?"

- A. Are not higher expectations justified? "Children," v. 45. Sermon on Mount.
- B. Love your own? So do unbelievers, v. 46 f.
- C. Hate your enemies? So do others, v. 43.
- D. What does Jesus say? "I say unto you, . . ." v. 44.
How unworthy we are! Dare we still call ourselves His own? Surely we need more of His grace.

II. A stirring challenge: "Be the children of your Father!"

- A. Impossible? Rather study His requirements (*ἀγαπάω*).
- B. See it in our Father (nature, v. 45).
- C. Witness it in His redemption ("children"). 1 John 4; Romans 5.
- D. He invests us with His nature. "We love because He first. . . ."
- E. Thus we are enabled truly to evidence our relationship, vv. 45, 48.

Let us rise to the challenge, grow more mature, perfect, "shine," v. 16.

W. A. SCHROEDER

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

MATT. 17:14-21

The Text and the Day.—The Lord has all power (Introit); with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit we are strong in the Lord and prepared for the battle against the forces of hell (Epistle); a weak faith made strong by Christ (Gospel)—these thoughts are embodied in the text.

Notes on Meaning.—V. 15. "Lunatic"—epileptic. Epilepsy was believed to be aggravated by the increase of the moon. This boy had more than a severe case of epilepsy. He was demon-possessed. V. 17. "O faithless and perverse generation!" This applied to those who gloated over the failure of the disciples, to those who were waiting for more signs, to the disciples who had to learn over and over to rely on the power of their Lord, and to the father who believed in the Lord's mercy, but doubted his ability. V. 18. A complete cure was effected instantly. V. 20. "Unbelief"—littleness of faith. "Remove this mountain"—do things impossible with mere human strength. V. 21. "Not but by prayer"—this implies that the disciples had neglected to pray, i.e., to rely on Another's strength. Christ had given them power against unclean spirits. Matt. 10:1.

Preaching Pitfalls.—Do not spend too much time describing the affliction of the boy.—Not every epileptic is possessed of Satan.—It will be better not to treat features of the story given only by Mark and Luke. If the preacher wishes to enlarge on Mark 9:22-24, then let him take Mark 9:14-29 as his text.

Preaching Emphases.—We look at this story in the light of Christ's decisive victory over Satan by His death and resurrection. Though Satan still manifests deep guile and great might, he is a defeated foe.—With mere human power we are helpless against Satan; with Christ and His Word we are stronger than Satan. Christ attributes such great power to faith because faith is the trolley which connects us with the power line of the Almighty.—We are to follow Jesus' example, who never avoided scenes of human misery or spiritual distress. Hymn 439, 5.

Problem and Goal.—Does this story have meaning for us today?

We may never see a man possessed by an evil spirit. But we can daily see the power of Satan manifested in the habits and attitudes of men. Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4. Satan's destructive activity is denied or ridiculed or at best ignored in many classrooms and much literature. Christ calls Satan *anthropoktonos*, John 8:44. The Gospel effects not only spiritual resurrection and enlightenment but also deliverance from the power of Satan. Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13. The weak faith — whose faith is not weak? — is to be encouraged and strengthened by being directed to the all-merciful, all-powerful Christ. Your Savior is great, even though your faith be small. Even with a small faith you can lay hold of the unlimited resources of Christ's power.

Outline:

DELIVERANCE THROUGH CHRIST FROM THE POWER OF SATAN

I. Satan's power.

- A. The power which Satan wielded over the demoniac boy illustrates the power he employs in deceiving and destroying the souls of men.
- B. Our impotence. Like the disciples we shall fail utterly whenever we rely on our own strength or try to pit mere human resources against Satan.

II. Christ's power.

- A. It is far superior to Satan's power. We see this more clearly in the light of Christ's finished work than the people in the story of the text could at that time.
- B. By faith we tap the resources of Christ's unlimited power. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you," v. 20. Shall we, like the disciples, miss opportunities for glorious victories through lack of faith?

V. L. MEYER

REFORMATION DAY

MATT. 16:15-19

The Text and the Day. — The observance of Reformation Day is becoming more general and popular in America. The civil and political, the social and economic implications of the 16th-century

Reformation are receiving renewed attention. This should prove wholesome for America. But the spiritual nature of the Reformation and the source of its power must chiefly be set forth and duly stressed. This text offers valuable material. Here Jesus Himself, the Founder and great Head of the Church, speaks of the chief purpose of the Church and of its abiding strength and ultimate victory.

Notes on Meaning. — Jesus is here dealing only with the Twelve. His teaching ministry is nearing its close, and He is examining the disciples whom He had been training to become His Apostles. The chief question is that regarding His person. All His teaching, all His work, stands or falls with the answer to that question. — V. 16. "*The Christ*," the title of His office, the Anointed One, the Messiah. "*The Son*," the only One. "*Living God*," not a dead idol or figment of men's fancy, but the *one true* God. "Flesh and blood," human effort and wisdom; "revealed," cp. Matt. 13:11, 17; 1 Cor. 2:5-10; Eph. 3:4-5. "Bar-Jona," the human paternity of Peter is emphasized over against the divinity of Christ. — The addition "in heaven" emphasizes the spiritual and divine nature of this revelation and the faith founded upon the same. Only the Christian religion comes from heaven and leads into heaven. Cp. John 1:18; 3:11-13. — V. 18. The difference between *Petros* and *petra* should be simply explained, to make clear that they are not identical. *Petra*, the confession just made by Peter in behalf of the Twelve; hence, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; hence Christ Himself. Jesus as the Son of the living God, as the Christ of God, is the Rock on which His enduring Church is built. Psalm 118:22; Is. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20. — V. 18 c. "Gates of hell," a figurative term borrowed from ancient type of warfare, the picked forces or all the power of hell. — V. 19. "Thee," singular; yet Jesus addresses him as representative of the Twelve, in whose behalf Peter had spoken in reply to Christ's question: "Whom do ye say . . .?" — "Bind — loose," same terms used in Matt. 18:18, same meaning as "remit and retain" in John 20:23. The power conferred upon Peter is no more and no less than that conferred on all the disciples.

Preaching Pitfalls and Emphases. — Avoid generalities about the

Papacy and the Lutheran Reformation. Other Reformation Day texts are available for exposing other doctrinal errors and unscriptural practices of Rome, for setting forth manifold blessings of the Reformation, for challenging the spirit of Protestantism, etc. This text specifically calls for a clear answer to the question: On whom or on what is the Church built?

Problem and Goal.—In this passage Christ uses two figures of speech, "rock" and "keys." It would appear advisable to build the sermon around either the one or the other, in order to give clear and full treatment.—In the outline submitted the intended goal is to give to the believer the divine assurance of the solidity and the stability of the Church's foundation; and to fill the hearts of the hearers with holy joy over Christ's assured victory and the believers' participation in the same.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Outline:

THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON CHRIST

- I. He is the Rock, or Foundation
 - A. Foretold by Prophets.
Also O. T. believers were built on Him.—Is. 26:16;
Ps. 118:22 (quoted Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7).
 - B. So declared by Christ Himself.—He is the Rock
 1. in His person, as Son of God
 2. in His office, as the Christ of God
 3. in His redemptive work
 - C. Hence, no other foundation
 1. not Peter, nor any other Apostle,
 2. not the wisdom of men (v. 17, flesh and blood)
 3. not human virtue (v. 19, forgiveness needed)
- II. Therefore Christ's Church will prevail
 - A. There will be opposition from hell.
 1. Christ foretold it.
 2. The Apostles experienced it.
 3. Nineteen centuries of the Christian Church tell of this conflict.

B. *But* Christ's Church will endure.

1. Christ's assurance, v. 18.
2. Christ's defeat of the Tempter, His casting out of devils, His resurrection triumph, foretell His ultimate victory.
3. The history of 19 centuries supports Christ's promise that His Church will endure.

Conclusion. — Rejoice! Thank God for Christ's Church. Appreciate sound Scriptural preaching. — Assist in building on the Church's One Foundation.

MARTIN WALKER

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE LUTHERAN FRONT

Significant resolutions adopted by Lutheran bodies at their recent conventions and reported in their church papers (the *Augustana Lutheran*, *Lutheran Herald*, *Lutheran Standard*, the *Lutheran*) are the following:

1. The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, which convened in Washington, D. C., resolved:

a. Adoption of the proposal to become a charter member of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America (this contemplated new organization will embrace the Federal Council of Churches and seven other interchurch agencies, such as the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the Home Missions Council of North America, the International Council of Religious Education, and the United Stewardship Council);

b. Approval of the merger plan affecting the eight participating bodies in the National Lutheran Council; formation of a federation as an intermediate step was likewise approved;

c. Disapproval of any kind of diplomatic representation of the United States at the Vatican;

d. Approval in principle of the establishment by the National Lutheran Council of a Division on Latin America;

e. Unequivocal condemnation of warfare as "a crime against God and humanity" and a demand that the United States take the lead in a new all-out effort to end the "cold war" and to establish peace in the world.

2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, which met in Minneapolis, adopted these resolutions:

a. To decline participation in the movement to merge organically the eight bodies of the National Lutheran Council and to recommend that the National Lutheran Council do not become a federation;

b. To continue negotiations with the American Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church for the purpose of eventually effecting an organic merger with these groups;

c. To authorize its Union Committee, acting jointly with the committees of the American Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, to give exploratory consideration to any

approaches from either or both of the other two American Lutheran Conference bodies (the Augustana Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church) and to report back to the next convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. (NOTE: The Augustana Lutheran Church had previously declared itself in favor of a merger of all bodies represented in the National Lutheran Council, but had not indicated that it would not consider a "smaller" merger.)

3. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church, which met in Hutchinson, Minn., declared itself in favor of merging with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church and also indicated a desire that the Augustana Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church might participate in this merger. It rejected the proposed plan of federating or merging the eight bodies represented in the National Lutheran Council.

4. The Finnish Suomi Synod, which met in Ishpeming, Mich., resolved in favor of federating the eight Lutheran bodies participating in the National Lutheran Council and stated that it was not prepared at this time to take definite action on organic union.

Other Lutheran bodies in our country are still looking forward to their convention. The Synodical Conference and the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church meet in August, and the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church will hold their biennial conventions in October.

A careful scrutiny of the above data suggests a number of conclusions:

1. A merger of the eight bodies participating in the National Lutheran Council is, for the present, out of the question;

2. That the American Lutheran Church will approve of the three-way merger with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church appears likely;

3. That the Augustana Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church will in the foreseeable future resolve to merge with the other bodies in the American Lutheran Conference does not seem likely;

4. That the American Lutheran Church will approve of the *Common Confession* at its convention appears likely; how the other Lutheran bodies in the American Lutheran Conference will respond is very difficult to say;

5. Whether the Synodical Conference will take any action with

regard to the *Common Confession* appears doubtful, since at least one of the participating bodies in the Synodical Conference does not convene this year.

The adoption by our Synod of the *Common Confession* has resulted in varying reactions in other Lutheran groups. The editor of the *Lutheran Herald* (issue of July 25) comments:

The Missouri Synod has adopted the *Common Confession*. . . . We do not know whether the ALC will do likewise, but it is probable that this will be the case. What the situation will then be, we do not know. Presumably, doctrinal documents are not drawn up as an exercise in dogmatics. The unity which they reveal would ordinarily express itself in a closer fellowship—altar and pulpit fellowship at the least; organic merger at the most. So the old question rises: Do things equal to the same thing equal each other, ecclesiastically as otherwise? In other words: Does this action bring Missouri into the picture of our negotiations with the American Lutheran Church? We, frankly, do not know the answer. We rejoice that Missouri accepted the *Common Confession*, and at the same time express our unbounded astonishment that she did. If this opens the possibility of closer relationships between us and Missouri, we shall be happy. But if it places an obstacle in the path of negotiations among ALC, UELC, and ELC, we shall deplore it.

But the same editor is also concerned about the resolution of the Augustana Lutheran Church to become a charter member of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States. He writes in the same issue of the *Lutheran Herald*:

It is our conviction that every opportunity should be given Augustana [the Augustana Lutheran Church] to discuss the whole situation with our Joint Union Committee. We confess that we are not unduly optimistic of favorable results. Augustana's action in deciding to join the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA . . . makes the situation difficult, at least as far as the ELC is concerned. (And we have not heard the faintest intimation from any one in the ALC and UELC that those bodies entertain any intention of joining this ecumenical body.)

We are submitting the above data on the Lutheran front not for the sake of filling the pages of the MONTHLY with current news nor to provide opportunity for speculating on what seem to us to be imponderables. We wish rather to bring home to our readers that the Lutheran Church in our land is definitely on the way toward new alignments and that every consecrated member of our Synod, whether

he belong to the clergy or laity, owes it to his Savior and to his Church to be circumspect and sober in the midst of these developments and to implore God that He might endow the leaders of our Church with a special measure of divine wisdom so to steer the course of our Synod in the second half of this century that as Vice-President Hertwig so eloquently told the convention in terms of the words of St. Peter, "God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

P. M. B.

MEETING OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF W. C. C.

In the July 26 issue of the *Christian Century*, Harold E. Fey reports on the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches recently held in Toronto. It was the third annual meeting of the Central Committee, which was called into existence by the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in August, 1948.

Though Mr. Fey's report is much condensed, it does indicate that the 160 denominations now represented in the World Council are still having difficulty in determining their mutual relationships in the Council. According to Mr. Fey's report, sections of the report [submitted to the Committee] affirmed that "the member churches . . . recognize in other churches elements of the true church," that they "are willing to consult together in seeking to learn of the Lord Jesus Christ what witness he would have them bear to the world in his name," and that the churches "should recognize their solidarity with each other, render assistance to each other in case of need and refrain from such actions as are incompatible with brotherly relationships." Finally, so Mr. Fey quotes from the report, "the member churches enter into spiritual relationships through which they seek to learn from each other and to give help to each other in order that the body of Christ may be built up and that the life of the churches may be renewed." From these brief quotations it appears that some member churches in the World Council are not inclined so to water down existing differences in doctrine and practice as to forfeit and betray the historical place of these churches in Christendom. Refusing to submit to an emasculation of their beliefs and practices, these member churches will find it difficult, if not impossible, wholeheartedly and joyfully to work in common for the achievement of goals established by the Council in 1948.

Mr. Fey informs his readers that the next meeting of the World Council of Churches will be held in Evanston, Ill., at Northwestern University, for two weeks in the latter half of August, 1953; that this assembly will have 600 delegates, no alternates, only 150 consultants,

100 youth delegates, and not over 850 accredited visitors; and that its general theme will be something like "Jesus Christ as Lord is the only hope of both the church and the world."

P. M. B.

THE KOREAN SITUATION

On June 27 President Truman announced: "I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean troops cover and support." Since that announcement our Army, Navy, and Air Force are again active in a real war only five years after hostilities ceased in Japan. The reactions and repercussions on the home front are well known. Americans appear determined to support every effort of our Government to stave off the invasion and to help the people in southern Korea to maintain their government. The fear that World War III with its dreaded implications may soon be upon us has driven many people to amass stock piles of food and clothing and even refrigerators and automobiles and thus to create shortages and to superinduce black-marketing. The fear that their sons may be drafted for service is paralyzing the hearts of many parents. The reports of casualties, however limited these casualties may be, is filling American homes with grief and sorrow. At the same time no one seems as yet to have envisioned what could happen to our country if the Korean situation were to develop into a world-wide conflagration. That Communistic influence is making itself felt in Central American countries, especially in Guatemala, is evident from the recent reports by Will Lissner in the *New York Times*. How the Korean situation will affect our mission work in Japan, the Philippines, and Guatemala remains to be seen.

In the meantime there are important truths for Christians to remember. A number of St. Paul's admonitions apply with peculiar force, as "See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil; wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5: 15-17). Again, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good; be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12: 9-12). And, "I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and

peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior" (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

The sentiments of our Synod in this crisis as expressed by Dr. Behnken in his telegram to the White House on June 29 deserve to be recorded and remembered. The telegram reads:

Eight hundred and seventy-three delegates and one thousand visitors to the national convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, representing 5,566 parishes and 1,750,000 members in the United States and Canada, today unanimously joined in prayer for you, Mr. President, for Congress, and all who are in authority that God may grant you wisdom rightly to use the strength He has given our country, imploring God on High to turn the tide of war that threatens the world and to grant us and all nations peace. At the same time the convention pledged our Church to stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow Americans that the voice of our nation and, if necessary, its arms may be raised for what is right in the sight of God and good for the peace of the world.

P. M. B.

MODERN VIEWS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

The journal *Interpretation* devotes the greater part of its April issue to three articles and a sermon on the doctrine of Atonement. Prof. H. T. Kerr, Jr., under the heading "Love's Intention," discusses the motive of the Atonement. He stresses particularly the thought that the Cross of Christ can be understood only in the light of the preceding life and the subsequent resurrection of our Savior. He states that we must "see the cross not as an isolated or even climactic fact, but as part of the incarnation and the resurrection. . . . We must look at the beginning and the middle of God's redemptive drama in Christ from the end." He criticizes the Anselmic view because it is predicated on the necessity of the Atonement from the point of view of both God's and man's nature. Professor Kerr suggests that the answer to the Cross can best be found by having the Cross portrayed to us, on the one hand, as man's opposition to God's justice and, on the other hand, as the love of God which seeks the sinner in spite of his unworthiness. Only if we see the Atonement as God's judgment upon sin and as redeeming grace from the viewpoint of the resurrection, shall we be able to understand the motive behind the redemption.

In the second article Edwin Lewis discusses the Atonement under the theme "Creator and Creature." His main thought is that it lies in the very nature of God to seek fellowship, not only in the Trinitarian relation, but also in re-establishing the broken relation between

the Creator and His creature. In reading his analysis we felt that he was leaning toward the ancient recapitulation theory of the Atonement.

The third, and in our opinion the most significant, contribution was furnished by Gustav Aulén under the title "Chaos and Cosmos." It appears that Aulén realizes the weakness of his former overemphasis of the resurrection as presented in his book *Christus Victor*. However, to this observer it seems that Aulén has not materially changed his position. According to Aulén, the Atonement is a drama of the *duellum mirabile* between the demoniacal powers and God in Christ. The reconciliation is essentially the victory of the divine will itself. The Cross is the turning point in the war that God fights with the powers of evil, a war which had been going on throughout the history of the Old Testament and will continue until the end of time. However, through the work of Christ, this war entered into a new and decisive phase, the phase of victory. The enemies which God encounters in this conflict are sin, death, all the demoniacal powers represented by Satan and the Law. By destroying the dominion of the evil forces God reconciles the world unto Himself and is Himself reconciled. Since the Messiah is closely united with His people and acts as their Representative before God, His suffering and death have a representative character and expiated man's sin and guilt and at the same time liberated man from the evil powers which held him in bondage. Only by bearing the suffering, sin, and guilt of humanity can divine love accomplish the Atonement.

Aulén maintains that in Christian thinking the Cross has so dominated that the resurrection has been viewed merely as God's stamp of approval on the work of Christ. This overemphasis of the Cross presents the Atonement as an event already completed in history and views the work of Christ chiefly as a "legal settlement between God and Christ." To counteract this so-called Anselmic view, Aulén would direct attention primarily to the victorious element in the drama of the reconciliation. Such a re-orientation, says Aulén, enables us to see the Atonement as being continued today by the Church through its proclamation; as a drama in which the divine law of love today and every day overcomes the demoniacal forces. This drama is never ended, though the conditions of the fight have been changed. In every generation "the Spirit of God has the same hard work to do" with every man, until the final battle is won in eschatology.

These three articles no doubt help to emphasize certain phases of

the doctrine of the Atonement. But there is always the grave danger that in overemphasizing one facet the core of the Atonement may be lost entirely. As is pointed out in the first article of this issue of our journal, the story of our redemption is so many-sided and so rich that no pastor will ever exhaust this theme. The words of Luther in the Preface of the Large Catechism certainly apply here: "For inasmuch as God Himself is not ashamed to teach these things daily, as knowing nothing better to teach, and always keeps teaching the same thing and does not take up anything new or different, and all the saints know nothing better or different to learning and getting finished learning this, are we not the finest of all fellows to imagine if we have once read or heard it, that we know it all and have no further need to read and learn, but can finish in one hour what God Himself cannot finish teaching?" (*Trigl.*, 573.)

F. E. M.

HISTORICAL RELATIVISM OF DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY AND BIBLICAL STUDY

There is probably no field of theology in which the pendulum has swung so far from one extreme to the other as in exegesis. For a season Higher Criticism was concerned exclusively with a historico-critical approach to the entire Bible, centering ultimately in the quest for "the historical Jesus." This extreme form of historicism was gradually supplanted by "*Formgeschichte*" and "*Heilsgeschichte*." But now the pendulum has come to the other extreme in "dialectical theology," which operates with "superhistory" and ultimately makes all religious history relativistic. Karl Barth of Basel and Rudolf Bultmann of Marburg are currently the chief exponents of religious historical relativism. Barth has developed such a high Christology that, as Baillie puts it, he has given us a superhistorical Christ in the place of the historical Jesus. Every Christian knows that without the historical record of our Savior's life there can be no Christology. Of Bultmann someone has said that he is another face of Karl Barth. This was quite a shock to Karl Barth and prompted him to disassociate himself from the Marburg theologian, whose principle of *Entmythologisierung* is so radical that he has been called a resurrected Strauss.

John H. Otwell of the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Calif., in the *Harvard Theological Review*, April issue, under the title "Neo-Orthodoxy and Biblical Research," subjects Barth's and Bultmann's historical relativism to a severe critique. It is Professor Otwell's contention that the dialectical theology has deeply and seriously influenced New Testament studies, because it plays so loosely with the history of

the New Testament. Otwell believes that Barth's historical relativism is a natural outgrowth of the basic principle of dialectical theology, to wit: that there is an impassable gulf between the "wholly-other" God and sinful man. As a result of this absolute difference, man is totally unqualified to attain any knowledge of God (including what is usually called the natural knowledge of God). Whatever man considers to be a knowledge of God is in reality only a reflection of his own sinfulness. Since man can do nothing to find God, God takes the initiative and reveals Himself. For Barth the *act* of revelation, whether of His wrath or His love, is the core of the Gospel. In the words of Barth: "Revelation in the Bible means the self-disclosure to man of the God [who is] undisclosable in His nature to man." In other words, revelation is not to be identified with the subject matter which God revealed through men, but the distinct act whereby God enters human history. Barth says that the Person of Christ is the act of revelation. Accordingly, in his view, revelation is at the same time the incarnation and the reconciliation. It follows, says Barth, that this act of God is inaccessible to historical investigation. Only Scripture can interpret itself, because Scripture is an expression of God's free activity, which is never subject to human interpretation. Otwell's criticism of Barth is that he rejects an examination of the historical background and demands that the Bible be interpreted according to the "*Pneumatik-Exegese*"—or, shall we say, according to a preconceived unifying theme—which leaves the historian nothing but a meaningless shell of the historical Jesus.

Otwell holds that Bultmann's underlying principles are in reality the same as those of Karl Barth. Like Barth, Bultmann holds that man is inherently sinful and unable to find God. God, on the other hand, is so righteous that He is the "wholly-other." Because of this qualitative difference it is impossible for man to have any knowledge of God. In fact, any attempt of man to know God is in reality man's self-worship. Only by a divine act is a revelation possible. Bultmann, differing from Barth, conceives this divine act to be "an encounter with God which quickens within the seeker a dormant knowledge of his own true nature." He calls this divine act the "address," an encounter between God and man which quickens in man self-knowledge. In Bultmann's theory, Christ enters into the picture in so far that it is His message which causes this self-awakening. Also the later proclamation of the Church about Christ is a part of this "address," provided that the message is presented in such a way that man is brought to a conviction of his sinfulness and is led into "the

experience of revelation." Here is where Bultmann's radical theory of textual criticism comes into play. He holds that many human accretions, especially such views as reflect first-century culture, have been interpolated particularly into the synoptic Gospels. These accretions are really only "myths," which must be eliminated from the New Testament canon, hence Bultmann's theory of "*Entmythologisierung*." Bultmann therefore eliminates from the New Testament all references which to him seem unimportant for, or contrary to, his theory that God "addresses" us in Jesus Christ. Thus, as Otwell points out, Bultmann's "historical" approach is that of a subjective speculative historian and is not historical at all. It is Otwell's contention that true Biblical theology requires that the historian and the theologian must pool their efforts.

The issues described above remind us of the theological conflict between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian Schools. The former advocated a highly metaphysical concept of Christ, and the latter urged the theologians to restrict their studies to the biographical record of the Savior. The Holy Spirit, however, shows us how the Christian must study both the Person and the work of Christ in the words of St. John: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." (John 20: 30-31.)

F. E. M.

ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Proposals have been made that the Protestant Episcopal House of Bishops investigate alleged breaches of Church doctrine by the bishops of New Hampshire and Washington, D.C., it was made known in New York by the American Church Union. The Union charges that Bishop Charles F. Hall of New Hampshire violated "the doctrine, discipline and worship" of the communion by taking part in a "joint ordination" with a Presbyterian and a Congregational minister at Manchester, N.H., on April 24. It also announced that the Maryland Branch of the Clerical Union for the Maintenance and Defense of Catholic Principles has called on the House of Bishops to investigate the action of Bishop Angus Dun of Washington in "having denominational ministers (Lutheran and Congregational clergymen) officiate" at an Episcopalian service on Ash Wednesday. The group said Bishop Dun also invited "all Christian ministers of Washington, except those of the Roman Church, to 'join with us . . . by receiving Holy Com-

munion.'” The Church Union condemned the action of Bishop Hall as “presumptuous, mischievous, and irregular” and added that it was “the most flagrant breach of the Church’s doctrine and discipline yet committed in the Episcopal Church throughout its history.” The Maryland group asserted that Bishop Dun’s action “constitutes a flagrant disregard of the doctrine and discipline of this Church, a serious affront to thousands of loyal churchmen, and direct violations of the canons of the Church and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.” A national group within the Episcopal Church, the American Church Union is “dedicated to upholding the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church as an integral part of the whole Catholic Church of Christ. Its expressed aim is for the extension and defense of the traditional faith of the Church.”

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. passed a resolution at Cincinnati opposing marriages between Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. The resolution stated: “Resolved that this convention earnestly warns members of our Church against contracting marriages with Roman Catholics under conditions imposed by modern Roman Catholic law, especially as these conditions involve a promise to have their children brought up in a religious system which they themselves cannot accept; and further, because the religious education and spiritual training of their children by word or example is a paramount duty of parents and should never be neglected or left entirely to others, we assert that in no circumstances should a member of this church give any understanding, as a condition of marriage, that the children should be brought up in the practice of another communion.”

Eighteen ministerial students from various seminaries have begun working in Pittsburgh steel mills and factories under the auspices of the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations. Jobs were provided through the co-operation of several Pittsburgh industrialists and labor leaders who expressed interest in the project. The program is designed to prepare the students for a ministry to urban industrial communities. The eighteen students are from Yale, Union, Princeton, McCormick, San Francisco, and Bloomfield seminaries. Local headquarters of the group are at Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary.

The Public Affairs Institute of Washington, D.C., has addressed an open letter to 350 church leaders calling upon them to convene a “world Congress on Religion and Poverty.” Mr. Dewey Anderson, the director of the Institute, said the letter grew out of the Institute’s research and

recent publication of a series of eight studies of the conditions underlying President Truman's Point Four Program, which visualizes aid for underdeveloped nations. "While the suggested program," Mr. Anderson said, "does not outline a course of action to end the cold war immediately, any world-wide religious congress on the removal of poverty would directly affect the thinking and feeling of millions of people about the cold war. They may well learn that their national goals can only be achieved by the avoidance of war. They may gain hope and regain faith through this joint effort. They may be less likely to turn in desperation toward authoritarian and godless leadership to solve their misery."

The Church of England is suffering from an inadequate number of clergy. According to the Rt. Rev. Harold W. Bradfield, Bishop of Bath and Wells, the 1900 population of 32,000,000 was served by 20,000 clergy, while 585 men were ordained that year. In 1949 the population was 45,000,000, but there were only 15,000 clergy and 362 ordinations. "As 600 clergy are lost by death and retirement each year and not more than 500 are ordained," Bishop Bradfield declared, "the Church is not making up its numbers. Consequently there are large urban areas which are pitfully understaffed."

The 1950 official Catholic directory shows that Roman Catholics in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, now number 27,766,141 or 1,047,798 more than was reported in 1949. Archdioceses which have more than 1,000,000 Catholics are Chicago, with 1,691,681; Boston, 1,302,985; New York, 1,260,328; Philadelphia, 1,058,058; and Newark, 1,028,951. The largest diocese is Brooklyn, N. Y., with 1,249,197 Catholics, followed by Pittsburgh with 805,699.

Premier Wilhelm Pieck of East Germany warned about 10,000 German children who took part in the Russian Zone youth rally against the teachings of the Christian Church. The Premier told the children, who ranged in age from 9 to 14 years: "High church officials have recently started a strong campaign against dialectical materialism, which is the scientific basis of our educational system. As we all know, faith begins when knowledge ends. One could even suspect that the church has joined the anti-democratic, imperialistic and warmongering forces of the world that are out to lead us into a new world war."

On June 3 and 4 the All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Weirton, W. Va., dedicated its new edifice, a \$250,000 replica of the St. Sofia Cathedral in Istanbul, Turkey. The new church, built of cream brick

and gray stone, with a dome of burnished copper and featuring Byzantine architecture, has a seating capacity of 2,500.

A Vatican radio broadcast heard in London apologized to listeners for a shortage of church news from Czechoslovakia and other Iron Curtain countries, saying it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain information from those nations. According to the broadcast, the Communists are stepping up their efforts to prevent the leakage of news dealing with their antireligious activities.

A training center for Roman Catholic priests who hope someday to carry on a religious ministry in Soviet Russia and Iron Curtain countries is being conducted at Chevretogne in the heart of the Belgian Ardennes Mountains. The training center is being operated under the auspices of the "Oeuvre des Eglises," a Benedictine institution. Many of the priests who are receiving training at Chevretogne are of Slav origin and are receiving special "Russianizing" courses to adapt them to the special mission to which they may one day be called.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Cincinnati, approved a report reaffirming its stand for separation of Church and State. The rabbis approved seven specific recommendations made in the report. 1. "We protest against the use of our public schools as places of Bible distribution." 2. "We do not believe that parochial schools, Christian or Jewish, should be indirectly subsidized from public tax money." 3. "The use of clergymen as official paid court officers is in violation of the principle of the separation of church and state." 4. "No public funds should be used for the support of the auxiliary needs of private sectarian schools, such as bus service." 5. "We protest against the practice of getting the support of town or city officials through governmental edict or proclamation of a holy day that is not significant to the non-Christian public." 6. "Religious bodies must not be permitted to use public buildings for the display of their strictly religious symbols." 7. "We recommend that provision be made for the periodic publication by the church and state committee of a newsletter to be sent to each conference member, and that this publication contain up to the minute information on the church and state relationship."

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral Church of St. Nicolas in Nicea near Athens, Greece, in a solemn Liturgy service, commemorated the 1,625th anniversary of the first ecumenical council held in Nicea in 325 A. D.

BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion. By Albert Schweitzer. Translated with an Introduction by Walter Lowrie. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1950. 174 pages, 5½×8½. \$3.00.

This book, written in German, was originally published in 1901. In 1913 Walter Lowrie, then an Episcopalian rector in Rome, translated it into English. At first German New Testament scholars rather ignored it, but after in 1906 the famous work of Schweitzer *Von Weimarus zu Wrede* had appeared, in which he stresses the development of research and criticism in the area pertaining to the life of Jesus, he was recognized as a scholar who had to be reckoned with. Schweitzer sponsored the so-called eschatological view of Jesus' work and teaching. Opposing the liberal theologians who had made Jesus' message consist chiefly of the three principles: the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the value of the human soul, and who had labeled Jesus' teaching on the end of the world and the coming judgment a non-essential feature of His proclamation, Schweitzer took the position that if Jesus did teach anything with clarity and vigor, it was the coming of the great final catastrophe, ending the world's existence, and the necessity to prepare for it. Schweitzer, sad to say, taught this in a thoroughly destructive way, saying that Jesus expected the end to come a very short time after His death, when He would return in the clouds of heaven as the triumphant Messiah; Schweitzer added that, of course, Jesus was mistaken in this expectation, but he urged that this fact should not keep us from seeing clearly what Jesus' teaching had been. One sees that here we have a case of tiger eating tiger, one negative school attacking and attempting to demolish the other.

When Lowrie's translation was made, Schweitzer's eschatological views were still much debated, especially in England. But soon most scholars, both liberal and conservative, saw that while he had exposed some of the unhistorical views of the so-called "liberal" school, he had himself fallen into grave errors, interpreting everything in the Gospels from his particular point of view and throwing true objectivity to the winds. Around 1912 Schweitzer went to the Congo as a medical missionary and came to be much admired for the service which he was willing to render human beings living in utter wretchedness. That admiration has continued, but his eschatological interpretation has been discarded more and more. In fact, nowadays it is referred to as an aberration, interesting on account of

its author, but otherwise not entitled to serious study. Why was the book reprinted? Undoubtedly on account of the deep interest in Schweitzer, created the last years not only through his trip to America and his famous contribution at the Goethe Celebration at Aspen, Colo., July, 1949, but on account of other books that have appeared on his life and his unselfish "mission" endeavors and his many extraordinary accomplishments. The publishers must have believed that a reprint of Schweitzer's early work would be enthusiastically received. Those that particularly enjoy reading books which present bold, even if thoroughly unorthodox, speculations, or, to think of a motive of a somewhat higher kind, those that would like to know what views Dr. Schweitzer expressed as a young man, will be drawn to this book. If they love the Jesus of the Gospels, they will be repelled. One of the chief views of Schweitzer is that Jesus predicted His suffering from an early date in His ministry, because He looked upon Himself as the Messiah and the opinion was prevalent that the days before the revelation of the Messiah would be days of great affliction; and that Jesus told His disciples they too would have to suffer in the interim. The suffering which Jesus expected to endure, so Schweitzer contends, was regarded by Himself as something by which He would be "purified unto perfection" (p. 110 f.). When at Caesarea Philippi Jesus had told His disciples about His coming Passion, the new note which He sounded and which startled them was that He would first have to suffer alone, even before the affliction of the last times (*ib.*). The disciples, however, did not understand. One sees how truth and error are here intermingled. Alas! the present-day negative critics of the New Testament have not become more conservative; they simply declare the eschatological discourses unhistorical, not delivered by Jesus, but ascribed to Him gradually as tradition was taking on its form or forms. "And wisdom is justified of her children."

W. ARNDT

CHAPTERS IN A LIFE OF PAUL. By John Knox. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York-Nashville. 168 pages, 6×9. \$2.50.

When one peruses this well-written and delightfully printed book, one soon becomes aware that a New Testament scholar of marked ability is speaking. Dr. Knox is professor of sacred literature at Union Seminary, N. Y., having come to his present chair from a New Testament professorship at the University of Chicago. It very soon becomes evident, too, that in his critical decisions he sponsors decidedly negative views. The book of Acts is held to contain serious errors in its delineation of Paul's career, and of the Letters bearing the name of Paul not only the Pastorals, but Ephesians, too, is declared unauthentic. Is the Tuebingen School coming back to life, albeit in a new garb? Baur and his followers called Acts a document which presents history in a tendential way, suppressing important occurrences and coloring others in order to produce a certain impression. A very definite and courageous opposition to this position

developed, and a very different view was set forth ultimately by Th. Zahn, A. Deissmann, Wm. Ramsay, A. T. Robertson, and many others. The historical reliability of Acts was triumphantly vindicated. For a while it seemed that the Tuebingen views were as dead as Baur himself. But now the old negativeness is stalking again, though in a somewhat altered form. Acts is held to be in disagreement with Paul's Epistles and to lack in reliability. The basis for these views are the old charges, refuted many a time, alleging that at vital points, f.i., in matters of chronology, contradictions exist between the writings of Paul and those of Luke. The author is so captivated by his own theories that he does not notice the inconsistency he becomes guilty of when in some instances the argument from silence does not mean a thing to him, and in others he makes it a deciding factor. Thus he holds (p. 58) that when Paul in Galatians 1 mentions his activity in Syria and Cilicia, he could have said, too, that he had labored in Galatia and Asia, in Macedonia and Greece. "It is true that he does not mention these various fields in Gal. 1:21. But there is not the slightest reason why he should." The unbiased reader will say that Paul mentions only Syria and Cilicia because during the first fourteen years after his conversion he did not go farther west. But Dr. Knox, placing the conversion of Paul late, holds that in spite of the silence of the text on this point, the activities of Paul in western Asia Minor and in Europe, which we connect with his first and second missionary journeys, must be assumed to have taken place before the visit in Jerusalem mentioned Gal. 2:1 ff. (a visit which he identifies with the one briefly reported Acts 18:22). On the other hand, the argument from silence is invoked (p. 63) to prove that the so-called famine visit Acts 11:29-30 cannot be the same as that spoken of Gal. 2:1-10 ("except for the fact that Barnabas is mentioned with Paul there is no point of correspondence between them"). The author arrives at the amazing hypothesis that "it was from Ephesus or Corinth, not from Antioch, that Paul made his trip to Jerusalem 'after fourteen years.'" We are quite sure that the critical positions of the author, implying as they do the existence of serious errors in Acts, will not win much credence.

But the book is not solely, and not even chiefly, concerned with chronology. It is composed of three parts, bearing the headings: Concerning Sources; The Career of the Apostle; The Man in Christ. Though the presuppositions throughout are those of naturalistic theology, some valuable observations occur in the sections dealing with the fundamental teachings of the Apostle. Intensely interesting is the section in which the author sketches what Paul has to say on "forgiveness." He points out that the term found so frequently in the Gospels occurs very seldom in the Pauline Letters; but he shows that the entire message of the Apostle is permeated with the blessed truth that God forgives sins. In that connection these sentences are found: "The place of 'forgiveness' is taken in Paul by two terms, 'justification' and 'reconciliation.' 'Justification' is es-

essentially a legal term and means 'acquittal'; 'reconciliation' is essentially a personal term and means the restoration of community" (p. 146). The author's view that Paul in his analysis of what is meant by God's forgiveness separates divine justice and divine mercy and "that the division which Paul made in the meaning of forgiveness was one of the most tragically fateful developments in the whole history of Christian theology and therefore in the intellectual history of mankind" (p. 147), we, of course, reject. The author, furthermore, is troubled by the apparent antinomy formed by the concepts "forgiveness" and "repentance" when their equivalents (for the terms themselves are rarely used by the Apostle) are studied in Paul's writings (p. 154). He thinks that Paul has not presented a satisfactory explanation of the relation between these factors (p. 154). The Lutheran theologian here at once thinks of the difficulty arising in our mind when the concepts "objective justification" and "subjective justification" are studied in their relation to each other. But why not take the course of Paul? Where the metaphysician sees problems, he saw great realities which he proclaimed with grateful conviction. While the last chapters of Dr. Knox's book contain much that arouses our dissent, they compel us to study anew the blessed message of the Apostle, which means a great gain for everyone of us. In conclusion, it should be stated that the book is not intended to be a "life of Paul," but "an attempt to deal with a few problems which a writer of such a life would have to consider" (page 7).

W. ARNDT

"BARNES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT." Two volumes, Psalms III and Isaiah I. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1950. 408 and 509 pages, 9x6. \$3.50 a volume.

These two volumes represent the latest additions to the famous "Barnes' Notes on the Bible" edition by the Baker Book House of Grand Rapids. In form and make-up they strictly follow their predecessors. In his running exposition of the Biblical text, Dr. Barnes selected only the difficult expressions, but to these he added exhaustive and practically helpful explanations. Thus *ad* Is. 25:7: . . . "in victory" we find the remark: "Heb. *lanezach*. Paul, in 1 Cor. 15:54, has translated this, *eis nikos*—'unto victory.' The word *nikos* (victory) is often the translation of the word (see 2 Kings 2:26; Job 36:7; Lam. 3:18; Amos 1:2; 8:7)," etc. The remaining remarks on the rendering of *lanezach* with *eis nikos* defend this free translation of the LXX and the N.T. The "Notes" were originally written to aid Sunday school teachers in their work of teaching, but they are a rich treasure of exegetical, doctrinal, and practical expositions for busy pastors. We recommend also these two new volumes of "Barnes' Notes" to our pastors. "Barnes' Notes" are a fine companion volume of the "Pulpit Bible," so much in use in our circles.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

A SCIENTIFIC MAN AND THE BIBLE. A PERSONAL TESTIMONY. By Howard A. Kelly, M.D., LL.D. Harper & Brothers, New York. 158 pages, 7½×5½. \$1.50.

Conservative Christians will welcome this fine "Anvil Reprint" of Dr. Kelly's simple but stirring and convincing defense of the Bible and its fundamental doctrines—the Whole Bible the Word of God, the Deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Blood Atonement, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Lord's Return. The last chapter is millennialistic, though Dr. Kelly presents his millennialistic views only moderately. The introductory chapter, "How I Came to My Present Faith," is one which every pastor should discuss with his Bible or other classes of youths and adults that study Christian doctrine, because of its great inspirational values. Despite occasional flaws the book deserves a place in every school and Sunday school library, for it presents the personal witness of the Christian faith by one of the greatest surgeons that ever served at Johns Hopkins' renowned medical school. Dr. Kelly was one of the "big four" of this famous school's four famous surgeons. Nevertheless, despite his vast medical knowledge, surgical skill, and personal fame he remained one of Christ's sincere believers, who after his retirement devoted his entire time to bearing witness to the Christian truth by personally speaking to those he met and distributing apologetic books and pamphlets written by himself. We cordially recommend Dr. Kelly's fine popular apologetic to our Lutheran circles for careful study. The many conservative works, quoted among the "Anvil Reprints," we are glad to say, testify to the rising tide of conservatism in American theology today.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

AN ECCLESIASTICAL OCTOPUS. A Factual Report on the Federal Council of the Church of Christ in America. By Ernest Gordon. Fellowship Press, Boston. C. 1948. 171 pages, 5½×8¼. Cloth bound, \$2.00; Paper bound, \$1.25.

In 1926 Ernest Gordon published his well-written *The Leaven of the Sadducees* (Bible Institute Colportage Ass'n), a study of Unitarian invasion of mission, religious education, and the theological seminaries. The present book repeats some of the same material and all of the same attitude and applies them to the Federal Council of Churches. Mr. Gordon is still facile at turning a phrase. He seems to be influenced to the point of phobia by his hostility toward Rockefeller money and the social gospel. He breaks several lances against whiskey and tobacco and lauds the social victories of Aberhard and Manning in Alberta as a contrast to the social fruitfulness of the F.C.C. With some of the premises with which Mr. Gordon operates we must perforce agree—the essential of regeneration because of the redemptive work of Christ, the essential of the Church as an agency for this regeneration. How valid some of the documentation and propaganda of this book is demands careful inquiry.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

CONRAD GREBEL. THE FOUNDER OF THE SWISS BRETHREN. By Harold S. Bender. The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Ind. 327 pages, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$. \$3.50.

This is the sixth volume in a series of seven historical works, "Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History," sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society, which has its headquarters at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. Study No. 6 is to appear in two volumes, of which this is the first, the two together bearing the title *The Life and Letters of Conrad Grebel*. The volume before us closely follows in method and make-up John Horsch's *The Hutterian Brethren*, which appeared in 1931. It is well written, carefully documented, historically accurate, scholarly in its approach, and graphically descriptive, so that it makes fascinating reading. It is a book that should be in every college and seminary library where the history of the Reformation is being studied. So much on the Anabaptist and Mennonite history has been written by opponents of this movement that the student is bound to welcome a work by one of its friends and supporters. Dr. Bender is fully competent to write on the history of Anabaptist pioneers. After he had completed his theological studies at Garrett and Princeton, he secured his master's degree in history at Princeton University, then continued his studies at Tuebingen and Heidelberg, graduating from the latter school in 1935 with the earned doctorate of theology in church history. He is the founder and editor of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, president of the Mennonite Historical Society, and author of several scholarly books on Mennonite history and biography. Conrad Grebel was a pioneer worker on behalf of Anabaptism in Switzerland and died at the age of 28 years. His struggle with Zwingli, the leader of the Zurich Reformation movement, the presentation of his doctrinal views, and his sufferings for the cause which he represented, make interesting and profitable reading.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS AND OTHER SELECTED SERMONS. By John Calvin. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1950. 212 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$3.00.

Fourteen sermons of John Calvin are herewith reprinted from a collection by John Forbes printed in 1830 in New York. They are useful for getting an understanding of Calvin's expository method. "The Salvation of All Men" (p. 97 f.) is a useful summary of Calvin's doctrine of particular election and of his equation of saving grace and predestination. It would be helpful to know more of the setting of these sermons and whether their original is French or Latin.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

PREACHING THE MIRACLES OF JESUS. By Hillyer Hawthorne Straton. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 223 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$2.50.

This book combines the breadth of scholarship with the interests of the practical preacher. The bibliography is unusually useful. Dr. Straton

gathers the miracles of Jesus under six major headings. While not beyond rationalizing some of the miracles, Dr. Straton is ready to employ faith concerning the power of our Lord. His first concern is to derive the lesson for the faith and life of Christians which Christ and the Evangelists sought to teach through the miracles. While the experienced preacher will have found other emphases from time to time to be more preachable, he will find the book stimulating nevertheless. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

JESUS AND THE DISINHERITED. By Howard Thurman. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. C. 1949. 112 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. \$1.25.

The author of this touching and penetrating book is a colored pastor and former college professor. His thesis is that if the Christian Gospel is to reach the disinherited—and they are the great majority of men in the world—the disinherited themselves must learn to understand the mechanisms of fear, deception, and hate which bar them off from the privileged. He stresses the ministry of Jesus as that of One who Himself was underprivileged and poor and which sought to bring help to the poor. The author's deep feeling and scarred past cause him to be somewhat insensitive to the contributions which the Epistles of St. Paul make to the same subject. It is also strange that he does not make more of the First Epistle of John. The redemption through the Cross plays no part in his study. He is chiefly concerned with analyzing the barriers between the colored and the white and the contributions which both have made to them. He describes the essentials of love and forgiveness, yet regards them as a preface to the hold of Christ on hearts rather than a product. While theologically meager, the book is most objective psychologically and is a most useful revelation of the point of view, for the white man, of the other side. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY. By William Goolooze, Th.D., D.D. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 266 pages, 6×9 . \$3.50.

This is a book which truly deserves a place on our professional shelves. Its author is professor of Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Mich., and it was written especially for ministerial students and pastors to serve as a basis of study in pastoral psychology. It aims, and we believe successfully, to combine psychology and pastoral theology so as to aid those who give it careful study in practicing truly Christian pastoral counseling. The book breathes a conservative Christian spirit throughout, the only defect we noted being the author's denial of a Christian pastor's authority to absolve penitent sinners.

The book has a most astounding bibliography of no less than 709 volumes, arranged as follows: The Psychology-Social Crises, 25; Pastoral Theology, 184; Principles of Psychology, 132; Applied Psychology, 42; Psychoanalysis, 12; Freud, 11; Personality Development, 38; Pastoral

Psychology, 89; Christian Life, 48; Sickness and Health, 31; Sex and Family Life, 15; Effects of War, 12; Physical, mental, and spiritual hygiene, 49; Counseling, 21. There are also 54 articles on various subjects in these fields. An additional 28 pages are devoted to a Bible reference, author, and subject-matter index. The book is replete with quotations from this bibliography and reveals a tremendous application and painstaking zeal for detail on the part of its author. And it is a book, best of all, that speaks frankly of sin and grace, not merely of traits and tensions and inhibitions, not hesitating to fault those writers who would cure the mental and spiritual ills of mankind by scientific methods rather than by the Word of the Great Physician, who alone can save and heal.

OTTO E. SOHN

THE SANCTITY OF SEX. By Frank A. Lawes. Good News Publishers, Chicago, Ill. 79 pages, 7×5. \$1.00.

A little volume with a warm Christian glow and a holy endeavor to aid Christian youth in the consecration of the sex instinct. Aside from a few untenable Scripture text interpretations one cannot fail to appreciate the clear and positive suggestions which the author makes to help one overcome the lust of the flesh and to keep soul and body undefiled. It is deserving of a place on our Pastoral Counseling shelf.

O. E. SOHN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

PORTALS OF PRAYER NO. 99. Daily Devotions July 29 to September 18, 1950. By Alfred Doerffler. 10 cents.

ANDACHTSBUECHLEIN NO. 99 — "MOSES DER FUEHRER SEINES VOLKS." Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 29. Juli bis zum 18. September 1950. By R. Herrmann. 10 cents.

CONCORDIA BIBLE TEACHER. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE. 79 pages, 7½×5. \$1.00 per annum.

CONCORDIA BIBLE STUDENT. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE. 63 pages, 7½×5. 65 cents per annum.

From the National Council, Protestant Episcopal Church, New York:

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. THE CHURCH'S TEACHING. Volume One. By Robert C. Dentan et al. 1949. 214 pages, 5¾×8½. \$1.50.

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